

PROPOSITIONAL UNITY AND REPRESENTATION:  
THEORIES OF JUDGEMENT FROM KANT TO WITTGENSTEIN

Zuzana Dankova

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
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# Propositional Unity and Representation: Theories of Judgement from Kant to Wittgenstein

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University of  
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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
at the University of St Andrews

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## **Abstract**

The aim of the thesis is to provide a fresh look at the beginning of the British analytic tradition, represented by early G. E. Moore and B. Russell and later by a young L. Wittgenstein, and emphasize especially the way in which this tradition was influenced by Kant's transcendental-idealistic epistemology in general, and the notion of judgment in particular. In doing so, I open my account by focusing on how Moore's ground-breaking notion of a "proposition" as a mentally-independent entity emerged out of his critical reflections on Kant's account of judgment as a mental activity of bringing representations under the unity of transcendental apperception. Subsequently, I present Russell as adopting this notion of a proposition, providing a thoroughgoing analysis of it and, after discovering its philosophical shortcomings, finally abandoning it in favour of his multiple relation theory of judgment. Based on the detailed description of the nature and changes within Russell's multiple relation theory, I then attempt to disentangle Wittgenstein's famous, oft discussed argument against it and introduce the notion of a "proposition" from the *Tractatus* as Wittgenstein's attempt at the more appropriate theory of judgment. Eventually, I illuminate how the approaches to judgement and proposition under consideration may all be considered particular responses to Kant's transcendental-idealistic epistemology, something I do by paying attention in particular to the notions of unity of single propositions and judgments as opposed to the overall unity within the body of all propositions or judgments.

## **General acknowledgements**

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# Introduction

When analytic philosophy emerged at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was a radically new and innovative successor to the centuries-old metaphysics that preceded it; or at least so the Viennese logical positivists thought. However, no philosophy has ever emerged out of the blue; every philosopher has had one way or another to answer questions that were circulating in philosophical debates a long time before him. We may even say that philosophy revolves around several basic puzzles which have been and will probably forever be the same. The question concerning the nature of judgement is definitely one of those old, ever newly emerging questions – how is it possible that we make judgements about the world? How do these judgements bear the possibility of being true or false? What is the truth or falsity of judgement? And what is judgement itself – a mental act by which we interpret the world or alternatively something non-subjective?

When Russell begins his early book on Leibniz by saying “[t]hat all sound philosophy should begin with an analysis of propositions, is a truth too evident, perhaps, to demand a proof”<sup>1</sup>, we may wonder why he considered this so apparent. Peter Hylton explains that the problem of the unity of the proposition, which emerged at the onset of the analytic tradition, is essentially the same as the problem of the unity of judgement, which could be traced back to Leibniz and Kant.<sup>2</sup> In turn, we may notice that questions about the nature of judgement had been widely discussed even prior to the modern era (although it is also true that Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Hume and other “moderns” definitely gave them a new shape).

The aim of my thesis is not to cover this whole tradition – a task probably too big for a whole lifetime. Rather, I will concentrate on a much narrower question of whether – and if so, how – the beginning of the British analytic tradition (represented by early Moore and Russell and later by a young Wittgenstein) was influenced by Kant’s conception of epistemology and, specifically, by the conception of judgement – as an activity of mind – which stands at the centre of it. I have chosen this approach because it seems to me relatively neglected – while the

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1 Russell, B. (1992). *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 9.

2 Hylton, P. (1984). The Nature of the Proposition and the Revolt against Idealism. In: R. Rorty, ed., *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 375–97, p. 375.

role played by the specifically British form of idealism in the philosophies of young Moore and Russell has already been examined, most famously and comprehensively by Hylton,<sup>3</sup> such extensive scholarly attention has not yet been given to the influence of Kant's transcendental idealism.

What account of judgement does Kant put forward? I will offer here a few introductory remarks. According to Mark Textor, at the heart of Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*) lies "the synthetic model of judgement", in which Kant describes judgement as the synthesis of representations into a unity (in Kantian terms the "transcendental unity of apperception").<sup>4</sup> In a similar vein, Artur Rojszczak and Barry Smith claim that Kant's epistemology presents what they call the "combination theory of judgement", a theory in which the act of judgement, conceived of as a process of combining or separating variously described mental entities (concepts, representations or ideas), is given central importance.<sup>5</sup>

Even before Moore's and Russell's criticisms, philosophical opposition to idealism in general, and Kant's transcendentalism in particular, had begun gradually to emerge on the Continent. Responding to Kant's epistemology, theories of judgement appeared during and especially at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century which from various perspectives cast doubt on Kant's synthetic or combination model of judging activity. On the Continent, Brentano was essential in paving the way towards a new theory of judgement subsequently elaborated by his followers.<sup>6</sup> Brentano's theory of judgement represented an alternative to the Kantian synthetic model of judgement since Brentano did not conceive of judgement as a predication (which is for Kant an important form of synthesis), but rather as an acknowledgement or rejection of the

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3 Hylton, P. (1990). *Russell, Idealism, and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

4 Textor, M., ed. (2013). *Judgement and Truth in Early Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, Introduction, p. 1.

5 Rojszczak, A. and Smith, B. (2003). Theories of Judgement. In: T. Baldwin, ed., *The Cambridge History of Philosophy 1870-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 157–173, p. 157.

6 However, were it not for the debates with neo-Kantians, who in many aspects reformulated Kant's epistemology, discussions about the nature of judgement would not have had the particular shape we know from the history of philosophy. Thus, for instance, Adolf Reinach from the Munich phenomenology school opened the debate which became prominent after Russell's work: he confronted Brentanians with a question concerning a false judgement – does a false judgement also have a referent or not? See Reinach, A. (1911). *Zur Theorie des negativen Urteils*. In: A. Reinach (1921). *Gesammelte Schriften*. ed. by his students. Halle: Max Niemeyer. Trans. as *On the Theory of Negative Judgement*, in B. Smith, ed., (1982). *Parts and Moments. Studies in Logic and Formal Ontology*. Munich: Philosophia Verlag. pp. 315–377. And debates over the nature of referents of judgements took place as well: Reinach, Stumpf and Lotze insisted that referents of judgement are always states of affairs (*Sachverhalten*), while Brentano supposed (at least according to Reinach) that any object can be judged, see Reinach, 1911 and Textor, 2013, Introduction, p. 3.

object given in presentation.<sup>7</sup>

Brentano himself, famous for characterizing mental phenomena as bearing “intentionality” (i.e. being related to something other than themselves), conceived of the object of judgement as mentally inexistent.<sup>8</sup> However, his disciples generally refused this part of his theory and elaborated views in which they distinguished the act of judging, the content of judgement (Brentano’s mentally inexistent object) and the external, non-mental object towards which judgement is directed (apart from when we carry out a judgement about our own mental phenomena). Most notably, this conception was thoroughly elaborated by the Polish philosopher and logician Kazimierz Twardowski in his famous little book *Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen* (*On the Content and Object of Presentations*).<sup>9</sup> Here, Twardowski formulated claims that had already appeared in the accounts of some of his contemporaries, but which he described with unprecedented clarity and underpinned for the first time with precise argumentation.<sup>10</sup> He distinguished the act, content and object of judgement, and defined content as the link between the act and the object of judgement by means of which an act intends this particular and no other object.<sup>11</sup>

Twardowski’s explicit distinction between the act, content and object (of judgement) can be seen as a stepping stone towards the subsequent ontologies of objects of judgement in Meinong, Ehrenfels and others.<sup>12</sup> While Brentano focused on the subjective side of judgement (the judgmental act and content), his followers turned their attention more to the external objects of our judgemental activity and devoted special attention to their internal complexity and unity (independent of our judgemental activity). Thus, the Austrian philosopher Christian von Ehrenfels enriched the philosophical vocabulary with the word “Gestalt quality” (*Gestaltqualität*), referring to what he proposed was the quality of the external objects of judgement. Those objects typically consist of several parts, and their unity cannot be explicated

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7 Textor, 2013, Introduction, pp. 1-2.

8 However, some commentators claim that Brentano did not conceive of objects as being immanently present in our mind, see e.g. Dummett, M. (1994). *Origins of Analytical Philosophy*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press. p. 31ff.

9 Twardowski, K. (1894). *Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen, eine psychologische Untersuchung*. Wien: A. Hölder. English translation: Twardowski, K. (1977). *On the Content and Object of Presentations: A Psychological Investigation*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

10 See Betti, A. We Owe It to Sigwart! A New Look at the Content/Object Distinction in Early Phenomenological Theories of Judgment from Brentano to Twardowski. In: Textor, 2013, pp. 74-96, p. 75.

11 Twardowski, 1894, p. 7 (“When the object is presented and when it is judged, in both cases there occurs a third thing, besides the mental act and its object, which is, as it were, a sign of the object: its mental ‘picture’ when it is presented and its existence when it is judged.”)

12 Rojszczak and Smith, 2003, p. 167.

without taking into account a special quality over and above their particular parts that joins them all together. Ehrenfels' considerations regarding the complexity of judgement's objects were further developed by his teacher, an Austrian philosopher renowned for his ontology of non-existent objects, Alexius Meinong.<sup>13</sup>

Meinong proposed that judgement is distinctively related to a special kind of object: an "objective", one of the representatives of Meinong's "objects of higher order".<sup>14</sup> While in representation we relate ourselves to a simple object or quality (an apple, a red colour etc.), in judgement we are directed towards particular fact about these objects or qualities (that the apple is red etc.). Objectives are composed of several elements, but they are not reducible to their sum, since they are in possession of a special complexity. Objectives consist of so called "founding objects" and "founded objects", comparable to Ehrenfels' "Gestalt qualities". The former present the basic elements on which the later are built. (Thus, in our example, on the simple objects apple and red, the relation of predicating "the apple is red" is erected).

For both Ehrenfels and Meinong, complex objects, in spite of their complexity, possess a unity. They are not merely the sum of their constituents, but are also necessarily endowed with uniting elements of a special kind which bind them into complex wholes: in Ehrenfels, the Gestalt quality, the quality of the whole, takes this role, while in Meinong it is a relation which binds all other elements of the complex together. Turning our attention to the potential influence of the Brentanian tradition on young Moore and Russell, it is these two interrelated philosophical issues, *complexity* and its *unity*, that are likely to have had the greatest importance.

When we now turn our attention to work happening in Britain, we find young Russell and Moore beginning their studies at Cambridge in a philosophical environment in which British idealism was the predominant force. That part of their philosophical background has been already examined in detail.<sup>15</sup> Of the first generation of British idealists (those active in the

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13 See Meinongian ontology in: Meinong, A. (1899). Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung und deren Verhältnis zur inneren Wahrnehmung. *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane*, pp. 182—272. And Russell's discussion in: Russell, B. (1904a). Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (I.). *Mind*, 13(50), pp. 204-219; Russell, B. (1904b). Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (II.). *Mind*, 13(51), pp. 336-354 and Russell, B. (1904c). Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (III.). *Mind*, 13(52), pp. 509-524.

14 See the discussion later, section 3.2.1.

15 See e.g. Hylton, 1984; Hylton, 1990; Griffin, N. (1991). *Russell's Idealist Apprenticeship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press or Baldwin, T. (1984). Moore's Rejection of Idealism. In: Rorty, 1984.

mid-nineteen century), it was T. H. Green who most notably incorporated German idealism into British philosophy, criticising British empiricism and associanism from a “broadly Kantian point of view”.<sup>16</sup> He insisted that explaining cognition requires accounting for the conditions under which cognition is possible, which he called “formal conceptions” or simply (under Kant’s influence) “categories”.<sup>17</sup> It is probable that neither young Moore nor young Russell devoted much effort to arguing against empiricism since they took it to have already been refuted by Green.<sup>18</sup>

It was an idealist of a more Hegelian fashion who was initially the most lauded by young Moore and Russell, namely F. H. Bradley. Russell reported that G. F. Stout, an entirely non-idealistic philosopher with an avid interest in psychology, “thought very highly of Bradley; when Bradley’s *Appearance and Reality* was published, Stout said it had done as much as is humanly possible in ontology”.<sup>19</sup> And Russell personally “read Bradley at this time with avidity, and admired him more than any other recent philosopher”.<sup>20</sup> In an essay from this time, he even called Bradley’s major philosophical contribution, *Appearance and Reality*, an “epoch-making work”.<sup>21</sup>

The young Moore was similarly enthusiastic about Bradley. In his 1897 Dissertation he claimed that he shared “by far greater agreement with Mr. F. H. Bradley’s general philosophical attitude” than with Edward Caird, an interpreter of Kant whose philosophical approach seemed to him overly subjectivistic.<sup>22</sup> Most strikingly, Moore said that “[i]t is to Mr. Bradley that I chiefly owe my conception of the fundamental problems of Metaphysics”.<sup>23</sup> For some time, Bradley’s philosophy of absolute idealism provided Moore with a viable alternative to what seemed the overly subjectivistic Kantian philosophy, emphasizing as it did the non-subjective nature of the absolute spirit.<sup>24</sup> The enthusiasm for Bradley’s absolute idealism did not, however,

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16 Green, T. H. (1906). *Prolegomena to Ethics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, p. 35.

17 See e.g. Green, T. H. (1894). *The Works of Thomas Hill Green, 3 Vols*. London: Longman, p. 207 ff.

18 See Hylton, 1990, p. 22.

19 Russell, B. (1944). *My Mental Development*. In: J. G. Slater, ed., (1997). *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell, Volume 11: Last Philosophical Testament 1947-68*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 5-17, p. 10.

20 Ibid.

21 Russell, B. (1895). The Free-Will Problem from an Idealist Standpoint. In: K. Blackwell, ed. (1983). *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell – Volume 1: Cambridge Essays, 1888-1899*, London and New York: Allen & Unwin, p. 230; dated by Russell, 8 June 1895.

22 Preti, C. (2013). The Origin and Influence of G. E. Moore’s ‘The Nature of Judgment’. In: Textor, 2013, pp. 183-205.

23 This claim is included in the first version of the Dissertation from 1897, see Moore, G. E. (2011). *Early Philosophical Writings*. Baldwin, T. and Preti, C. eds., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 4.

24 Preti, 2013, p. 189.



last long. Both Moore and Russell gradually came up with their own, in essential respects anti-idealistic, notions of judgement and concepts.

Apart from the British idealists, there was also another important figure in Britain who exerted considerable influence on both Moore and Russell: G. F. Stout, an editor of *Mind* from 1892 to 1920 and a philosopher deeply interested in psychology, acknowledged for introducing Brentano's philosophy of psychology to the English-speaking world. Stout was even more influenced by Brentano's followers, perhaps most notably Twardowski, of whose *On the Content and Object of Presentations* he probably wrote an anonymous review for *Mind*.<sup>25</sup> When young Russell and Moore studied at Cambridge as undergraduates, Stout's lectures on the history of philosophy were part of their curriculum, and they must therefore have been at least partially familiar with his views on philosophy and psychology.<sup>26</sup> His main theoretical work is a voluminous, two-part *Analytic Psychology* with the subtitle *The Scope and Method of Psychology*.<sup>27</sup>

It is primarily in its first part of this book that we once again encounter questions about the complexity and unity of the object of judgement. The notion of an "analytic psychology" was Stout's translation of Brentano's "descriptive psychology", a term Brentano coined to describe the investigation of the mind's most basic psychic components, as opposed to empirical psychology which focuses on the genesis of our actual psychic processes.<sup>28</sup> The subject matter of analytic psychology is consciousness in general, which Stout described as "every possible kind of experience",<sup>29</sup> and like his contemporaries in the field of psychology he distinguished its various modes, e.g. apperception, belief, imagination, pleasure or pain.<sup>30</sup> Stout emphasized, as instructed by Brentanians, that investigations into the nature of judgement must also include scrutiny of the object of judgement. The object of judgement is for Stout a

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25 For this conjecture see Schaar, M. S. van der (2013). *G.F. Stout and the Psychological Origins of Analytic Philosophy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 66.

26 For this historical evidence, see Preti, C. (2013). The Origin and Influence of G. E. Moore's 'The Nature of judgement', in: Textor, 2013, pp. 183-205, p. 191.

27 Stout also wrote an article on Bradley's theory of judgement and on Russell's multiple relation theory of judgement: Stout, G. F. (1914). Mr. Russell's Theory of judgement. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 15, pp. 332-352; Stout, G. F. (1902-1903). Bradley's Theory of Judgement. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 3, pp. 1-28. See section 3.3.2 of the thesis for discussion of Stout's criticism of Russell's multiple-relation theory.

28 For the elaboration of this distinction see e.g. Brentano, F. (1892). *Deskriptive Psychologie*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag. Trans. as *Descriptive Psychology* (1982, 1995). London: Routledge. For Stout's account see Stout, G. F. (1896). *Analytic Psychology. In 2 Volumes, Vol. 1*, London: Sonnenschein, p. 36.

29 Stout, 1896, p. 19.

30 Ibid. For further discussion see Preti, 2013, pp. 192-193.

complex object, composed of various parts attainable by analysis,<sup>31</sup> external to consciousness,<sup>32</sup> whose complexity is mind-independent and which possesses its own mode of unity. This “form of unity” or “form of combination” is for Stout, as the Gestalt quality is for Ehrenfels, a separate object of apprehension.<sup>33</sup>

As students, Moore and Russell thus came under the influence not only of British idealism, but also the emerging Brentanian tradition. Neither philosopher actually began his university studying philosophy (or “moral sciences” as it was called at that time at Cambridge). Russell began in 1890, studying mathematics, and G. E. Moore a year later, studying classics. Both were soon, however, elected members of Cambridge Conversazione Society (the Apostles) at which they took part in philosophical discussions. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, between 1895 and 1899, a young Russell was immersed in his so called “Tiergarten programme”, an attempt to provide a unified dialectical account of the sciences, influenced by Bradley and another idealistic philosopher, McTaggart.<sup>34</sup>

As for Moore, he focused not on the philosophy of sciences, but ethics. During 1897, he began composing a dissertation on Kant’s account of ethics, will and pure practical reason, which he went on to submit for the Trinity Prize Fellowship. He wasn’t awarded the fellowship at this first attempt, but published a paper derived from the dissertation, “Freedom”, which appeared in *Mind* in 1898.<sup>35</sup> Although he later called the paper “absolutely worthless”<sup>36</sup>, it usefully illuminates how his philosophical views developed in the course of a year – a year later, his “The Nature of Judgement” appeared<sup>37</sup>, this time derived from a second, rewritten dissertation with which he successfully won the Fellowship.

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31 Schaar, 2013, p. 73: “In 1896 Stout does already acknowledge a special object of judgement: a complex object with a unity independent of the act of judgement, whose independent and dependent parts can be obtained by analysis.”

32 “We may, I think, confidently affirm that the object of thought is never a content of our finite consciousness. If the object exists at all in the sense in which the thinker refers to it, i.e. means or intends it, it exists independently of this consciousness [...]” (Stout, 1896, p. 40).

33 The similarity of Stout’s form of unity (or a form of combination) with Ehrengels’ “Gestalt quality” is not coincidental. As Schaar emphasizes, Stout intended his notion of a “form” to be a translation of Ehrenfels’ “Gestaltqualität”, see Schaar, 2013, p. 54; Stout, G. F. (1896). *Analytic Psychology. In 2 Volumes, Vol. 1*, London: Sonnenschein, p. 65.

34 See Griffin, 1991, pp. 204-207 and Preti, 2013, pp. 195-197. “Tiergarten” since it allegedly came to his mind while walking in Berlin Tiergarten park (in 1895), see Griffin, N. (1991). *Russell’s Idealist Apprenticeship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 204–7.

35 Moore, G. E. (1898). *Freedom. Mind*, 7, pp. 179-204.

36 Moore, G. E. (1942). *An Autobiography*. In P. Schlipp, ed., *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*. Evanston: Open Court, p. 21.

37 Moore, G. E. (1899). *The Nature of Judgment. Mind*, 8, pp. 176–193.



The year of 1898 was decisive for Moore's farewell to idealistic philosophy, since it was during his rewriting of the dissertation that, while pondering upon Kant's notion of pure theoretical reason and transcendental idealistic epistemology, he arrived at "a perfectly staggering doctrine". On 14 August 1898, he wrote to his friend Desmond MacCarthy, also a member of Apostles Society:

"I have arrived at a perfectly staggering doctrine: I had never seen where my principles would lead me. An existent is nothing but a proposition: nothing is but concepts. There is my philosophy... I am pleased to believe this is the most Platonic system of modern times [...]"<sup>38</sup>

Based on his investigation of Kant's view of judgement as the activity of unifying representations under the unity of transcendental apperception, Moore reached the conclusion that judgement is very different than Kant construed it to be: neither a mental activity, nor a mental entity of any kind. Under the more fitting title of "propositions", Moore proposed that judgements are completely independent of consciousness; they are parts of the world and as complexes are composed of similarly mind-independent concepts. Russell, when he finished reading Moore's dissertation, swiftly recognized the game-changing character of Moore's ideas, and from that time on applauded his colleague many times for freeing them both from the spell of British idealism:

"...with Moore, British philosophy returned to the kind of work in which it had been pre-eminent in former centuries. Those that are too young to remember the academic reign of German Idealism in English philosophy after T. H. Green can hardly appreciate what Moore achieved in the way of liberation from intellectual fetters. All honor and gratitude are due to him for this achievement."<sup>39</sup>

"It was towards the end of 1898 that Moore and I rebelled against both Kant and Hegel. Moore led the way, but I followed closely in his footsteps. I think that the first published account of the new philosophy was Moore's article in *Mind* on 'The Nature of Judgement'."<sup>40</sup>

When we look back to the philosophical background in which young Moore and Russell formulated their early philosophical views, we may recognize that they distanced themselves radically from the conception of judgement propounded by idealists, for whom it always was (in one way or another) "the work of the mind". Moreover, Moore's concept of judgement was

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38 See Preti, 2013. In: Textor, 2013 for further details. The letter can be found among Moore's manuscripts at Cambridge University's Manuscripts Reading Room at MS Add.8330.

39 Russell, B. (1959b). The Influence and Thought of G.E. Moore: A Symposium of Reminiscence by Four of his Friends. In: *The Listener*, April 30 1959, LXI, No. 1570, pp. 755-756.

40 Russell, B. (1959a). *My Philosophical Development*. London: Allen & Unwin.

distinctive even if compared with the Brentanian strand of philosophical and psychological investigations mentioned above, though it also concentrated on the issues concerning unity and complexity of an object of judging (or a proposition, as Moore called it). While Brentano's followers – including Stout in Britain – conceived of a judgement as a tripartite relation between the act of judging, content and object of judgement<sup>41</sup>, Moore's account effectively reduced this account to a simpler schema in which judgement consists merely of an act of judging and an object about which it is judged. Moreover, the act of judging was clearly unsubstantial to Moore, since the truth or falsity of a proposition (as an object of judgement) does not depend on whether it is judged by us or not.<sup>42</sup> Thus, we may agree with Moore's commentator Consuelo Preti's claim that in Moore "[t]he metaphysical nature of judgement is accounted for entirely by way of the object of judgement".<sup>43</sup>

While Moore approached the notion of judgement from within the field of ethics, Russell, initially a student of mathematics, took a journey through what we would now call philosophy of mathematics. In 1898, preparing a manuscript titled *An Analysis of Mathematical Reasoning (Being an Inquiry into the Subject-Matter, the Fundamental Conceptions, and the Necessary Postulates of Mathematics)*<sup>44</sup>, he paid more and more attention to the notion of relations. When he read Moore's Dissertation, it was precisely Moore's notion of "necessary relations among concepts" which he pinpointed as a ground-breaking discovery.<sup>45</sup> In his letter to Moore, he approved Moore's stance whole-heartedly: "I agree most emphatically with what you say about the several kinds of necessary relations among concepts, and I think their discovery is the true business of Logic (or Meta[physics] if you like)".<sup>46</sup>

The most significant upshot of Moore's notion of relations is that since they are necessary connections between concepts, they are not created by the mind. Moore's discovery

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41 Stout, 1896, p. 52; Preti, 2013, p. 48.

42 "Concepts are possible objects of thought; but that is no definition of them. It merely states that they may come into relation with a thinker; and in order that they may do anything, they must already be something. It is indifferent to their nature whether anybody thinks them or not" (Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 179).

43 Preti, 2013, p. 194. Preti even suggests that the fact that Moore used the notion of a "proposition" instead of a "judgement" is probably due to the influence of Stout's writings (Ibid.). For a similar interpretation see also Schaar, M. S. van der (2013). G. F. Stout and Russell's Earliest Account of Judgement. In: Textor, 2013, p. 146.

44 Russell, B. (1898). *An Analysis of Mathematical Reasoning*. Manuscript. In: N. Griffin and A. C. Lewis, eds. (1990), *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell – Volume 2: Philosophical Papers: 1896–99*. London: Unwin Hyman, pp. 163–222.

45 Moore, G. E. (1898). The 1898 Dissertation. The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics. In: Baldwin and Preti (2011). *G. E. Moore: Early Philosophical Writings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 173.

46 Russell to Moore, September 13, 1898. The original letter to be found at Cambridge University's Manuscripts Reading Room at Add.8330 8R/33/8; quoted in Preti, 2013, p. 202.

paved the way for understanding concepts, and relations amongst them, as mind-independent, and therefore for a departure from idealism in all its variants. In his first famous work in the philosophy of mathematics, *The Principles of Mathematics* from 1903, Russell postulated that there are various kinds of relations and that relations and predicates are just as ultimate, fundamental and self-subsistent as substances.<sup>47</sup> By claiming this, however, Russell again brought to the fore the question concerning the notions of unity and complexity: if any unificatory work of the mind is ruled out (as it indeed is in Russell's and Moore's accounts), how are the mutually independent entities (substances, relations and predicates) related into one *unified* whole, a meaningful proposition?

Moore's and Russell's notion of a proposition, an essential tool in their revolt against idealism, represents the beginning of my investigation. As the thesis unfolds, I will investigate Moore's, Russell's and, later in the story, Wittgenstein's theories of judgement, viewing them as reactions to the issues that arose within the field of – especially Kantian, transcendental – idealism. I will begin my inquiry, in the first chapter, by briefly introducing the basics of Kant's epistemology with a special emphasis laid on the role of the act of judging within our cognition. I will not get into specific details of the Kantian scholarship and will not tackle the controversial issues discussed within it. Rather, I wish to come up with a basic picture of what Kant's epistemology amounts to and of the essential role judgement plays within it.

In the second chapter, Moore's criticism of Kant's epistemology will come to the fore. Firstly, in order to provide a broader background from which Moore's rethinking of the nature of judgement and proposition is comprehensible, I will look, in 2.1, into Moore's criticism directed against various details of Kant's description of the process of cognition – I will explicate the way in which Moore criticized the reputedly overly subjectivistic nature of Kant's epistemological theory and how he attempted to discard Kant's arguments for the subjective nature of space, time, categories and synthesis.

Then, in 2.2, I will turn my attention to two arguments presented in Moore's "The Nature of Judgment" which Moore employed to argumentatively ground his new notion of a proposition by which he intended to replace Kant's notion of a judgement. The first argument, analysed in 2.2.1, which appears already at the very beginning of "The Nature of Judgment" is

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<sup>47</sup> Russell, B. (1903). *The Principles of Mathematics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in 2010, London: Routledge, p. 44.

directed against Bradley's theory of ideas and meaning of a judgement and attempts to prove that a judgement, under a more suitable term "proposition", must be considered completely mind-independent. The second argument, focused on in 2.2.2, is somewhat hidden in Moore's finishing remarks in "The Nature of Judgment" and is quite difficult to entangle in its precise form. For that reason, I will use Frege's more clearly stated (even if later published) argument against the possibility of the definition of truth from his article "Der Gedanke" ("The Thought")<sup>48</sup> to illuminate Moore's own argument which I consider in many respects similar to Frege's.

Eventually, I will conclude that neither of these two arguments completely succeeds in backing up Moore's notion of a proposition. Also, I will point out that, apart from the difficulties with Moore's arguments for his position, there is also a considerable vagueness in his account of a proposition – he merely claims that a proposition may be formed by any number of concepts together with a relation. However, it seems unpersuasive that there are no other constraints on the formation of meaningful proposition apart from those indicated by Moore.

It was Bertrand Russell who clearly recognized the difficulties in Moore's notion of a proposition and to whom I will thus turn in the third chapter. Russell himself, as I will explain in 3.1, embarked on the debates with German philosopher Hermann Lotze to argue that we need to admit the existence of mind-independent beings. It was then Moore who first labelled some of them as "propositions", and then again Russell who not only attempted to provide more detailed account of a proposition's composition (consisting of things, relations and predicates), but also pinpointed the essential issue the notion of mind-independent proposition necessarily raises: how to account for the fact that a proposition is not merely a collection of disunified elements, but rather a meaningful unity?

While idealists may have found a shelter in the claim that it is the mind which ascertains the unification of the concepts within a judgement, both Moore and Russell, furiously denying any "work of the mind" present in the constitution of a proposition, did not have this kind of answer in store. It might be, however, that their notion of a proposition provided them with no alternative answer either, especially when Russell came up with the claims that a proposition consists of several self-sufficient "terms" and that it necessarily loses its unity after the analysis.

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<sup>48</sup> Frege, G. (1918-1919). Der Gedanke. Eine logische Untersuchung. *Beiträge zur Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus*, 1, pp. 58–77. Trans. as Frege, G. (1996). The Thought. In: M. Beaney, ed., *The Frege Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 325-345.

In 3.2.1, I will attempt to shed some light on Russell's persuasion about the loss of propositional unity by putting it into the context of the debates concerning complexes and relations which took place among Brentanian followers at the Continent, especially in the work of Christian von Ehrenfels and Alexius Meinong. In 3.2.2, I will suggest that there was a further influence on Russell's persuasion concerning the loss of propositional unity after propositional analysis, namely Bradley's notion of analysis as falsification.

In 3.3, I will turn my attention to Russell's multiple relation theory of judgement which emerged as an alternative way to account for the nature of judgement after the difficulties with unity, truth, and falsity of propositions dissuaded Russell from advocating his initial account of propositions. In 3.3.1, I will summarize the changes which the multiple relation theory underwent in Russell's work, while pinpointing both the essential differences and similarities of all renderings of the theory. In 3.3.2, I will introduce and argue against two objections raised against Russell's theory (by G. F. Stout and S. Candlish) which, I presume, fall prey to the error of explicating a multiple relation theory in a misleading way as an example of a correspondence theory and derive from it unpersuasive consequences. When these objections fail, it is then logical to pay attention to probably the most famous criticism Russell's multiple relation theory has even come under, i.e. that raised by young Ludwig Wittgenstein in 1913.

It is the task of the fourth chapter, which begins by summarizing and evaluation of the traditional interpretation put forward by N. Griffin and S. Somerwille. After arguing against this rendering of Wittgenstein's criticism in 4.1.1, I will concentrate, in 4.1.2, on its most recent interpretations. Nowadays, it is generally acknowledged amongst scholars that Wittgenstein's objection centered around the "narrow direction-" and "wide direction problem" (in other words, the direction and unity problem). The first amounts to the claim that within Russell's theory of judgement, there are some cases (namely so called permutative non-symmetrical complexes) in which the elements within a judgemental complex may be assembled in (at least) two possible ways. The wide direction problem is even more far-reaching and amounts to the problem of a judgemental unity: Wittgenstein's objection is interpreted as claiming that elements within the judgment may be assembled in such a way that we may end up judging nonsense.

I agree that the unity problem is indeed one of the points Wittgenstein wished to emphasize in his interpretation, but I am also persuaded that there is more to this objection. Therefore, I will attend to those interpretations which understand Wittgenstein's objection as

concerning (also) some other issue(s) apart from the propositional unity: P. Hanks emphasizes the issue of propositional truth and falsity, C. Johnston the notion of a synthesis in thought and C. Pincock a correspondence between judgemental and worldly complexes. Drawing on the findings of these three commentators, I will come up, in 4.2, with my own rendering of Wittgenstein's objection which puts into its centre the difficulty with the general theory of complexes as a basis for Russell's multiple relation theory of judgement.

Then, based on my interpretation of the core of Wittgenstein's objection directed towards Russell's multiple relation theory, I will eventually turn, in the fifth chapter, to the investigation as to which theory of judgement Wittgenstein himself put forward, taking the lesson from his criticism of Russell's account. There, I will open the discussion by introducing, in 5.1, Wittgenstein's earliest surviving theory of propositions and judgements, i.e. that founded in his *Notes on Logic* from 1913. I will suggest that Wittgenstein's aim was primarily to account for propositional complexity and capacity to represent and indicate why he eventually ceased to believe that his theory from the *Notes* (based on the notion of propositions as bipolar) is capable of fulfilling this task.

Then, in 5.2, I will finally turn my attention to Wittgenstein's early master-piece, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus*. In 5.2.1, my exegesis will centre around Wittgenstein's famous picture theory which considers propositions as facts with a special feature: a capacity to represent things other than themselves. I will point out that Wittgenstein, in line with his motto that the correct theory of judgement must be grounded in an adequate theory of propositions, put into the centre of his theory of judgement exactly this notion of a proposition as a representing fact.<sup>49</sup> By building the representative capacity right into the heart of the theory of propositions, Wittgenstein, in his own eyes, succeeded where Russell failed, i.e. in providing a correct theory of judgement.

In 5.2.2, I will attempt to demonstrate that Wittgenstein's oft-cited account of judgement ascriptions from 5.542 may be understood as an application of the theory of propositions and their representational capacity elaborated already in the early sections of the *Tractatus*. Subsequently, in 5.3, I will pinpoint the fact that Wittgenstein's account of judgement ascriptions, which seems to provide a subjectless account of judgement, led several

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49 "The epistemological questions concerning the nature of judgment and belief cannot be solved without a correct apprehension of the form of the proposition" (Wittgenstein, L. (1913). *Notes on Logic*, The Birmingham Notes, In: M. Potter (2008). *Wittgenstein's Notes on Logic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, §55, p. 283).

commentators to the persuasion that there must be hidden a subject nevertheless, namely a transcendental subject which endows language with meaning. Subsequently, I will closely examine two of these accounts (provided by A. Kenny and H.-J. Glock), ending by arguing that their accounts of the transcendental subject and his work of providing language with meaning are unpersuasive.

Based on this denial of the role of transcendental subject in Wittgenstein's account of judgement, I will ask, in 5.4, whether we may consider his account of propositions and judgement ascriptions as anyhow influenced by Kant's philosophy. I will attempt to argue that we indeed may and that the central similarity can be found not primarily in the transcendental kind of philosophizing, but rather in both Kant's and Wittgenstein's persuasion concerning the intimate connection between the issue of the unity of a single judgement (or a proposition) and the overall unity in the body of judgements (or propositions). And finally, in the Conclusion of the thesis, I will take stock and explicate how my account of Moore's, Russell's and Wittgenstein's theories of judgement put forward throughout the thesis renders these theories as particular responses to Kant's epistemology.



# 1. Kant's Theory of Judgement

In this chapter, my aim is to describe the very basics of the epistemology embedded in Kant's transcendental idealism. This is essential for the subsequent sections of the thesis in which I will focus on the influence of transcendental idealism on the epistemology that was developed after Kant, especially in the works of Russell, Moore and Wittgenstein. In this section, I will briefly summarize Kant's conception of the process of cognition and the conditions of its possibility, with emphasis on its major elements or stages, i.e. various kinds of syntheses, categories (as forms of judgment applied to sensibly given) and the unity of apperception, which serves as a highest point into which all representations need to be brought by means of syntheses and categories.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant endeavours to describe the transcendental conditions necessary for the achievement of our cognition of an object.<sup>50</sup> In this context, he enumerates several essential elements, namely syntheses of a sensible manifold, categories ordering representations which have been acquired through syntheses, and the unity of apperception into which all representations need to be eventually brought. In my exposition here, I will proceed in a bottom-up manner, first explaining the transcendental conditions of the possibility of cognition from their lowest stages, then moving to the unity of apperception as the highest condition of cognition, and ending up with the explanation of how the cognitive process achieves its ultimate goal, namely the cognition of an object.

On the lowest level of the cognitive process, we need to synthesize the manifold of sensible intuition in order to be aware of the perception. This is achieved by means of the first form of synthesis introduced by Kant, namely by the synthesis of apprehension. At this point, perceptions are obtained, but they subsequently need to be somehow ordered, a task which is achieved by putting them into temporal relations of succession and simultaneity. This is carried out by the synthesis of imagination, which orders perceptions in the inner sense, or, more precisely, in time which functions as a form of inner sense. However, even if this synthesis generates the orderly combination of perceptions in the inner sense, their connection there is not yet a cognition, since to achieve cognition, we need to employ discursive cognitive

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50 Kant, I. (1781, 1787). *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Trans. as Kant, I. (1998). P. Guyer and W. Wood, eds., *Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, A99; B160. Further quoted as *CPR*.



capacities as well, i.e. forms of judgment in their application to sensible experience (categories).<sup>51</sup>

A judgment clearly plays an essential role in Kant's epistemology. The discussion which most clearly underscores its importance for cognition is included in §19 of the second version of the transcendental deduction of categories (B-deduction).<sup>52</sup> Judgment is here presented as an essential part of the cognitive process since it is that by means of which perceptions, presented in the inner sense, are brought into the unity of apperception as to the highest point of our cognitive process in which all our representations need to be united: "[J]udgment is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the *objective* unity of apperception."<sup>53</sup> While within the transcendental logic, i.e. mainly in the §19 of the B-deduction, it is merely stated *that* judgment is supposed to bring perceptions into the unity of apperception, it is within the confines of general logic that we can obtain a clearer view of how this task is achieved in judgment.<sup>54</sup>

General logic is supposed to describe the process of the subsumption of perceptions under the concepts, i.e. a process of analysis which succeeds their generation via the syntheses of apprehension and imagination. This process, even if it amounts to a mere analysis, is essential in the process of cognition since it explains how perceptions are subsumed under concepts in judgments and subsequently brought under the unity of apperception. Without going into details here, it is sufficient to note that this process of analysis is described in Kant's lectures on logic as the process of comparison of perceptions, reflection on their differences and similarities and abstraction from their differences – at the end of this process, we arrive at a concept, containing

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51 Cf. the famous formulation to this effect in the "Metaphysical deduction" (§10 of "On the Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts of the Understanding"): "The first thing that must be given to us *a priori* for the cognition of all objects is the *manifold* of pure intuition; the *synthesis* of this manifold by means of the imagination is the second thing, but it still does not yield cognition. The concepts that give this pure synthesis *unity*, and that consist solely in the representation of this necessary synthetic unity, are the third thing necessary for cognition of an object that comes before us, and they depend on the understanding" (Kant, *CPR*, A78-79/B104; emphases in the original).

52 Ibid., B140-B142.

53 Ibid., B141; emphasis in the original. Kant distinguishes the objective unity of apperception from a mere subjective consciousness of our representations in the inner sense which is, however, "itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject" (Ibid., B133).

54 In the *CPR*, we can find the notes concerning general logic within the section "On the Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts of the Understanding" (particularly in A67/B92-B116); the more detailed account is provided within Lectures on logic edited by Jäsche, see: Kant, I. (1800). *Logik. Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen herausgegeben bei Gottlob Benjamin Jäsche*. Transl. as. Kant, I. (1992). *The Jäsche Logic*. In: J. M. Young, ed., *Lectures on Logic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; pp. 521-640, §§ 1-16, pp. 589-597.

the features (“marks”) common to all representations which are contained under it.<sup>55</sup>

Subsequently, when we obtain concepts, those concepts themselves are put in the mutual relations within the judgments, while these relations are governed by the forms of judgements famously enumerated in the table of forms of judgements under the headings of quality, quantity, relations and modality.<sup>56</sup> The role of forms of judgements is to mediate a unity between concepts and thus unified brought them into the unity of apperception. Categories are introduced in connection with the forms of judgements since categories *are* the forms of judgements as applied to the sensibly given<sup>57</sup>: e.g. if we arrange concepts in a judgment of the categorical form, we apply the categories of substance and attribute to the perceptions contained under concepts; in hypothetical judgements, those of cause and effect are applied, in disjunctive judgement, the category of community etc. Categories thus serve in their unificatory function both at the discursive level of judgement where they ensure the connection between concepts and at the level of synthesis, when they serve as a rule governing the unificatory function of syntheses (of apprehension and of imagination).<sup>58</sup>

This whole process of various forms of unification is succinctly summarized in the final account of the first step of the transcendental deduction in §20<sup>59</sup>: The manifold of sensible intuition necessarily belongs to the synthetic unity of apperception; logical functions of judgment are actions by means of which the manifold of both intuitions and concepts is brought under the unity of transcendental apperception. Therefore, the manifold given in the empirical intuition is determined in regard to one of those logical functions, through which it is brought to the unity of transcendental apperception. And, finally, categories are those logical functions of judging as applied to the sensible manifold; and thus the whole manifold of sensible intuition stands under categories.

So far, we have seen how the unity is achieved within consciousness by bringing various

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55 Kant, 1800, p. 589ff.

56 Kant, *CPR*, A70/B95.

57 Ibid., A79/B105.

58 This twofold unificatory role of categories is spelled out in the famous formulation in *CPR*, B104/105: “The same function that gives unity to the different representations *in a judgment*, also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations *in an intuition*, which, expressed generally, is called the pure concept of understanding. The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings the logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytic unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of the understanding that pertain to object *a priori* [...]” (emphases in the original).

59 Ibid., B143.

representations, by means of syntheses and categories, into the unity of apperception. However, it still seems that something is missing which is essential for the process of cognition, namely the relation to a cognized object. It is evident that this relation to an object is in a sense the point of the whole process of cognition, since by employing our cognitive capacities, we attempt to gain a correct cognition of an object. So far, however, we have been discussing the *a priori* conditions for the cognition of an object (i.e. syntheses and categories and their capacity to bring representations into the unity of apperception), without paying special attention to the particular role an object of cognition has in the picture, i.e. how it is constituted and which characteristics may be ascribed to it.

As I have pointed out, the highest point toward which the unificatory process of cognition is directed and which is at the same time its utmost condition is the unity of transcendental apperception. As Kant famously declares at the beginning of the B-deduction, if I am to be aware of my representations as mine, it is not sufficient to accompany each of them with a particular (empirical) consciousness; I need to bring all of them into the unity of apperception (i.e. into the unity of consciousness).<sup>60</sup> Unity of consciousness as a unity in which all my representations need to be united to substantiate a cognition is thus the “highest point of our understanding”, to which all the unification both through synthesis and in judgement is directed.<sup>61</sup> This unity is supposed to enable the cognition of an object due to its ability to produce the unity within our representations. The cognition of an object as connected with the unification is described in the following concise paragraph from §17 of the B-deduction:

“*Understanding* is, generally speaking, the faculty of *cognitions*. These consist in the determinate relation [bestimmte Beziehung] of given representations to an object. An *object* [Object], however, is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is *united*. Now, however, all unification of representations requires unity of consciousness in the synthesis of them. Consequently, the unity of consciousness is that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object, thus their objective validity, and consequently is that which makes them into cognitions and on which even the possibility of the understanding rests.”<sup>62</sup>

Our cognitions thus consist in the relation to an object and “an object” is defined by the role it plays in connection with our cognitive capacities, namely as “that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united”. The impact of the notion of an object resides in the unification of our representations in it: an object is something in which the manifold of intuition,

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60 Ibid., B133.

61 Ibid., B134.

62 Ibid., B137; emphases in the original.

which was initially given to our cognitive capacities to be “processed”, is united.<sup>63</sup> It thus seems that the unification is essential at both ends of the cognitive process, i.e. to obtain cognition, we have to unite representations under the synthetic unity of apperception and, at the same time, an object, as a resulting “product” of our cognitive process, is rendered as that in the concept of which the manifold of intuition is united.

Even if the unity is thus two-sided (unity on the side of an object and on the side of our consciousness), it seems that it is the unity of apperception which serves as the ultimate basis for the unification since it is that unity “which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object”. Synthetic unity of consciousness is thus “an objective condition of all cognition”, i.e. “something under which every manifold of intuition must stand *in order to become an object for me*, since in any other way, and without this synthesis, the manifold would *not* be intuited in one consciousness.”<sup>64</sup> What is essential for us, however, is not which form of the unification is primary, but the fact that to represent an object at all, we have to achieve both the unity of consciousness in our representations, i.e. synthesize them in an orderly manner under the unity of apperception, and the unity in the concept of an object to which our cognition is related.

To summarize thus, the final “story” about the unificatory process of the understanding tells us that to cognize an object, we need to begin with sensory givenness in sensible intuition, undertake several syntheses, and bring the product of those syntheses by means of categories into the unity of consciousness. By achieving this unification of representations in the unity of apperception, we cognize an object as a unified counterpart of our cognitive undertaking. In the next section, we will see how young G. E. Moore critically approached Kant’s transcendental epistemology and how his criticism of Kant gradually paved the way towards his new concept of a proposition.

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<sup>63</sup> An object however does not stand for the transcendent, unknown object, but for an object as an appearance, only disregarding its particular mode of givenness. For this account of an object in the context discussed see Allison, H. (2004). *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism – Interpretation and Defense*. Revised and Enlarged Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, pp. 173-174 and related footnote 33, pp. 478-479.

<sup>64</sup> Kant, *CPR*, B138, emphasis in the original.

## 2. G. E. Moore and New Concept of Proposition

When we focus on Moore's early interest in Kant, we will inevitably reach the conclusion that he paid attention mostly to Kant's ethics, a fact suggested by the title of the two versions of the Dissertation he submitted for a prize fellowship at Cambridge, *The Metaphysical Basis of Ethics*.<sup>65</sup> However, we may find several essential changes in the second version of the Dissertation, most importantly the occurrence of two completely new chapters – chapter one, “On the Meaning of ‘Reason’ in Kant” and chapter two, “Reason”, excerpts from which were subsequently used to compose Moore's famous article “The Nature of Judgement”.<sup>66</sup> It is quite clear that these two chapters are not concerned with ethical issues, but with Kant's epistemology. As early as the introductory remarks in the first chapter of the second dissertation, “On the Meaning of ‘Reason’ in Kant”, Moore explains why he is interested in Kant's theoretical philosophy: practical and theoretical Reasons are not distinct entities, but one and the same Reason applies in two distinct domains. It follows, Moore contends, that if we throw some light on the theoretical application of Reason, we will gain some knowledge about practical Reason as well.<sup>67</sup>

This explanation is not in itself sufficient, however, considering that we could carry out some other investigations to throw some more light on the nature of practical Reason.<sup>68</sup> In other words, there must be some other, additional motivation for Moore's interest in the notion of theoretical Reason in Kant. My claim will be that the deepest motivation lies in Moore's concern with the notion of *a proposition* and that Moore's intention was, against a background of Kant's theoretical philosophy, to elucidate the nature of a proposition as a mind-independent entity which forms the part of reality and for which truth is its internal property. Moore starts his investigations with the observation that there has to be a connection between Kant's notion of Reason and that of truth. And the notion of a truth, in turn, led him to considerations

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65 Both versions of the Dissertation are published in: Baldwin, T. and Preti, C., eds. (2011). *G. E. Moore: Early Philosophical Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-94 and 115-242.

66 Moore, G. E. (1899). The Nature of Judgment, *Mind*, 8, pp. 176–93.

67 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 133.

68 Moore himself was keenly aware that despite the connection of the issues of theoretical and practical Reason, his inclusion of the considerations regarding the theoretical Reason made his dissertation less rather than more consistent, as he noted in the beginning of the letter to Russell from 11 September, 1898: “Almost all the addition to my dissertation was metaphysical, so that the whole does not hang together at all well”. Letter is to be found in the Russell archive at MacMaster University; quoted from Baldwin and Preti, 2011, Introduction, xxxiv.

concerning the truth (and falsity) of ideas and meanings, and their relations to reality:

“In the second year’s work (1897–98) I got on to what I think was a much more profitable line of inquiry, though one which had a much less direct connection with Kant’s Ethics – had, indeed, a more direct connection with the *Critique of Pure Reason* than with the *Critique of Practical Reason*. It seemed to me that it was extremely difficult to see clearly what Kant meant by ‘Reason.’ This was a term which occurred not only in the title of both these works, but also frequently in the text, and, as it seemed to me, in a very mystifying manner. What on earth did Kant mean by it? He must be referring, more or less directly, to something which was to be found in the world, and which could be described in other terms. But to what exactly? This was what I set myself to think about; and it led me to think first about the notion of ‘truth,’ since it seemed to me that, in some of its uses at all events, Kant’s term ‘Reason’ involved a reference to the notion of ‘truth;’ and, in thinking about truth, I was led to take as my text a passage from the beginning of Bradley’s *Logic*, in which after saying that ‘Truth and falsehood depend on the relation of our ideas to reality,’ he goes on to say that the ‘meaning’ of an idea consists in a part of its content ‘cut off, fixed by the mind, and considered apart from the existence’ of the idea in question [...]”<sup>69</sup>

Moore thus describes his journey from practical to theoretical Reason as involving, firstly, a curiosity about what Reason in itself is – i.e. whether it is something in the world and if so what in particular – and, secondly, his persuasion that the notion of Reason has something to do with the notion of truth. The notion of truth then subsequently led him to Bradley’s *The Principles of Logic* where Bradley claims, in the introductory remarks, that “truth and falsehood depend on the relation of our ideas to reality.”<sup>70</sup>

With the benefit of hindsight, we also know that Moore’s engagement with Bradley’s notion of meaning resulted in the famous argument against Bradley in which Moore argues against what he considers a mentalistic conception of meaning: meaning cannot be, due to the looming *infinite regress*, rendered as a part of the content cut off from a mental idea. Rather, Moore will claim, meaning has to be conceived of as an internal property of a proposition which amounts to a mind-independent entity whose truth or falsity does not depend on its being judged. In this chapter, I will attempt to explain this innovative yet surprising notion of a proposition Moore put forward in his dissertation and in his article “The Nature of Judgment”. In doing so, I will proceed in several subsequent steps.

Initially, I will attempt to explicate, in 2.1, the overall shape and main points of Moore’s criticism of Kant’s epistemology as he presented it particularly in the first chapter of the second

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69 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, Introduction, xiii.

70 Bradley, F. H. (1883). *The Principles of Logic*, 2 Volumes. London: Kegan Paul, Book I, Chapter I, §2, p. 6.

version of his Dissertation. I will attend primarily to his contention that Kant succeeded not in proving the subjective origin of the *a priori* elements, but merely in showing their logical priority. I will also point out how, based on this claim, Moore introduced his notion of “logical presuppositions” which he, however, swiftly abandoned in favour of his new concept of a mind-independent proposition. In section 2.2, I will go on to evaluate two arguments which Moore put forward to ground this notion of a proposition – an argument against abstractionism and an argument against the possibility of defining truth using the notion of correspondence. Based on this, we should be in a position to see both how Moore arrived at his notion of a proposition and how persuasively (or not) he grounded it with appropriate philosophical arguments.

## 2.1 Moore’s Criticism of Kant’s Epistemology

Even if we restrict our attention to the field of Kant’s theoretical philosophy, and thus leave behind completely the realm of practical philosophy and ethics in his work, the criticism that young Moore put forward is manifold and scattered both in the second Dissertation and several related articles, i.e. “Necessity” (1900)<sup>71</sup>, “Kant’s Idealism” (1903-1904)<sup>72</sup> and “Refutation of Idealism” (1903)<sup>73</sup>. Generally speaking, Thomas Baldwin is probably right in noting that most of Moore’s criticism is “not of great interest, since it rests on an excessively subjectivistic interpretation of Kant”.<sup>74</sup> The excessive subjectivism and distorted interpretation of Kant’s idealism is clearly present, for instance, in the final sections of the article “Kant’s Idealism” where Moore attempts to engraft Kant’s theoretical philosophy into the Berkeleyan form by arguing, among others, that Kant denies the existence of matter.<sup>75</sup>

Apart from these considerations, which are essentially misleading if taken as interpretations of Kant’s philosophy, it is however evident from many other places that Moore was well informed and erudite in Kant’s philosophy and that he took what he saw as Kant’s “too psychological standpoint”<sup>76</sup> as a serious flaw in his philosophical edifice and was willing to provide more fitting arguments than the interpretative excesses he offers, for instance, in the

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71 Moore, G. E. (1900). Necessity. *Mind*, 9, pp. 289-304.

72 Moore, G. E. (1903a). Kant’s Idealism. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 4, pp. 127-140.

73 Moore, G. E. (1903b). The Refutation of Idealism. *Mind*, 12, pp. 433–453.

74 Baldwin, T. (1999). *G. E. Moore – The Arguments of Philosophers*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 9. For similar interpretation with the emphasis on Kant’s reputedly too subjectivistic standpoint at the centre of Moore’s criticism see Baldwin and Preti, 2011, Introduction, xlvii.

75 Moore, 1903a, p. 139.

76 This term is introduced already in the first dissertation (Baldwin and Preti 2011, p. 62) as a “too psychological standpoint” and repeated in the second dissertation (*Ibid.*, p. 192) as a “psychological standpoint”.



“Refutation of Idealism”.<sup>77</sup> Moore’s objections to Kant’s philosophical position might not be always conclusive, but they nevertheless serve interestingly to elucidate the birth of his own theoretical stance.

My purpose here is to provide an overview of the line of arguments, offered by Moore in his second Dissertation, against Kant’s epistemology. I will focus in particular on his emphatic claim that Kant did not provide sufficient grounding for his thesis that *a priori* is characteristic of our conditions of cognition, and the contention that by linking *a priori* with these conditions, Kant is guilty of confusing the correct logical considerations with mere psychological remarks about the mental processes of cognizing.<sup>78</sup>

Moore recognizes that Kant provides, throughout the *Critique of Pure Reason*, several arguments for his “Copernican revolution” in epistemology, i.e. the claim that the cognition of an object requires that the object conforms to our cognitive faculties and not the other way round. Kant offers arguments for this revolutionary idea in the “Transcendental Aesthetic” and “Transcendental Analytic”, referring to the forms of intuition, i.e. space and time, and categories respectively.<sup>79</sup> In addition to this, he also put forward an indirect argument in the “Transcendental Dialectic”, where he suggests that the truth of transcendental idealism follows from the impossibility of otherwise escaping the antimonies of pure Reason.<sup>80</sup>

In the “Transcendental Aesthetic”, Kant comes up with the metaphysical and transcendental deductions of the *a priori* of space and time. In the metaphysical deduction, he claims that space cannot be derived from experience since it is already presupposed in distinguishing sensations as being different and at different places.<sup>81</sup> Within the transcendental deduction, Kant establishes the *a priori* nature of space from the necessary status of geometrical propositions – space needs to be presupposed as *a priori* if the propositions of geometry are necessary.<sup>82</sup> Addressing the first argument, Moore acknowledges that Kant indeed proved that

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77 There, Moore describes the “modern idealism”, without any further specifications, broadly as a claim that “*esse est percipi*”, i.e. that being of something amounts to its being perceived, see Moore, 1903b, p. 436ff.

78 It might be objected, though, from the perspective of Kantian advocates, that Moore is wrong in the very core of his criticism since the conditions of human cognition are not subjective in a sense of being *merely* subjective. They are supposed to be intersubjectively valid as well and in this sense, they are also objective, i.e. valid for all *our* possible cognition of the objects.

79 For the metaphysical and transcendental arguments regarding the *a priori* character of space and time see “Transcendental Aesthetic” in *CPR*, §§1-8; for the argument regarding the application of categories to sensibly given see “Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding”, *CPR*, §§13-27.

80 Ibid., A490/B518-A497/B525.

81 Ibid., A23/B38.

82 Ibid., B40-41.



“space is logically prior to the objects of experience”<sup>83</sup> and this logical priority may be even equated with *a priori*, but, Moore claims, Kant did not succeed in proving that space is subjective, i.e. he did not prove that space is a condition of our possibility of cognition.

In the argument from geometry, Moore distinguishes a similar slide from the logical priority to the subjective nature of space – it may be allowed that Kant proved that space is a logically prior condition of geometrical propositions, but he did not thereby prove that it is a condition of human cognition of geometrical propositions, i.e. that it “has the seat in the subject”.<sup>84</sup> It is true, however, as Baldwin and Preti point out, that Moore does not go into much detail concerning Kant’s treatment of the notions of space and particularly of time and that his denouncement of Kant’s arguments is therefore “rather abrupt”.<sup>85</sup>

As for the transcendental deduction of categories, Moore does not go into particular detail either, but he pays attention to the issue he is interested in, namely to the role of *a priori* and subjectivity in the deduction. In this context, he notes that the subjectivity of the categories is merely presupposed, and not proved, by the deduction, its aim being to prove that categories as subjective conditions of human understanding are also objective conditions for the cognition of an object.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, both in the “Transcendental Aesthetic” and “Transcendental Analytic”, Moore concludes, Kant does not keep the promise from the “Preface” to the *Critique of Pure Reason* to argue for the subjectivity of our cognitive capacities.<sup>87</sup>

Finally, Moore is persuaded that Kant does not score any better in the “Transcendental

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83 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 143.

84 Kant, *CPR*, B41.

85 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, Introduction, lx. Arguments concerning time are not discussed by Moore at all; however, in this approach he may be claimed to follow Kant himself who devoted more attention to the arguments concerning space even if time will become gradually essential, within the “Schematism of Pure Concepts of the Understanding” (A137/B176-A147/B187) in the treatment of the application of categories to the sensible manifold given in the inner sense. As for Moore, we may presume that he might have proceeded in a following fashion: the fact that time cannot be derived from experience since every experience is perceivable merely in time (A30/B46) and that the concepts of “alteration” and “motion” are possible merely “through and in the representation of time” (A32/B48) might be said to prove logical priority, but not the subjective nature of time (its seat in human subjectivity).

86 Baldwin and Preti 2011, pp. 145-146.

87 The place from the “Preface” to which Moore refers as the place where Kant puts forward the promise of explaining the possibility of *a priori* knowledge based on the contribution of our cognitive capacities is the section about metaphysics (Bxiv-Bxviii), and particularly Bxvi: “Up to now it has been assumed that all our cognition must conform to the objects; but all attempts to find out something about them *a priori* through concepts that would extend our cognition have, on this presupposition, come to nothing. Hence let us once try whether we do not get further with the problems of metaphysics by assuming that the objects must conform to our cognition, which would agree better with requested possibility of an *a priori* cognition of them, which is to establish something about objects before they are given to us.”

Dialectic”. Kant there attempts to prove, in the “Antinomies of Pure Reason”, that contradictions in our conception of reality result from the fact that we apply the notion of unconditionality – which belongs properly only to things in themselves – to mere appearances.<sup>88</sup> Moore agrees that we may indeed make contradictory claims about the objects of our experience, but is unwilling to accept Kant’s diagnosis that we in that case confuse mere appearances with things in themselves. Instead, Moore argues, the confusion may simply arise from our predicating upon one object what is true of another. “Nothing”, Moore says, “is gained [...] by the assumption that the one sort [of things] is appearance, or conditioned by our subjectivity.”<sup>89</sup>

Ultimately, however, Moore’s arguments against Kant’s “Copernican revolution” in epistemology do not seem to me to be satisfactory. This is largely because Moore only shows that Kant fails to provide proof for the transcendental nature of categories and forms of intuition and for the distinction between mere appearance and things in themselves, and not that such a proof cannot be provided.<sup>90</sup> But it is obvious that Moore himself took his demonstrations as sufficient to show that categories and forms of intuition are indeed non-subjective and he proceeded to further undermine the foundations of Kant’s epistemology.

In further demolishing these foundations, Moore pays attention to the most basic underpinning and the highest point of human cognition, namely the unity of transcendental apperception in which all representations must be encompassed if one is to obtain an objectively valid cognition of an object. Granting the denial of the subjectivity of supposed forms of intuition (space and time) and categories, an attack on the unity of apperception does not seem particularly arduous: to assert the existence and essential role of the unity of transcendental apperception seems appropriate only if we have initially established that representations are given to us merely by means of subjectively conceived forms of intuition and categories, since in this case, the unity of apperception may indeed serve as the highest point which unifies the representations into the cognition of an object.<sup>91</sup>

Once the transcendental status of categories, space and time has been rejected, it is not surprising that also the notion of synthesis follows their lead – Moore criticises Kant for

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88 Kant, *CPR*, A506/B534.

89 Baldwin and Preti 2011, p. 152.

90 For a similar observation see Hylton, 1990, p. 118.

91 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 147.

describing synthesis in active terms as an operation, since synthesis for Moore does not represent anything active, but amounts to “a mere name for the necessary connection of two disparate elements”.<sup>92</sup> And similarly, Moore also considers it misleading to call understanding a “faculty” and categories “functions”.<sup>93</sup> For him, the ideality of space and time, categories as functions of the understanding, synthesis which brings representations into the unity of apperception and this unity itself belong jointly to an explanation which is, at best, able to describe the process of cognition, but not its truth or falsity, which is the topic proper for epistemology.<sup>94</sup>

The accusation of psychologizing instead of doing a proper epistemology is Moore’s final verdict on the reputedly unacceptable parts of Kant’s epistemological edifice: the unity of apperception, together with the transcendently ideal nature of space, time and forms of judgment (categories) need to be rejected as of a merely marginal, psychological importance, while the acceptable epistemological considerations must be confined to categories, space and time as logically prior, yet non-subjective elements. “Epistemology” according to Moore amounts to “the science which investigates the nature of truth”, not a science concerning the process of cognition.<sup>95</sup> Moore intends his epistemology proper, since it is not a theory of cognition, to avoid the irrelevant causal considerations he claims Kant focused on – which properly belong to “empirical psychology”<sup>96</sup> – and to concern itself instead with the truth and falsity of mind-independent propositions.

According to Moore, what Kant actually proved is that space, time and categories as logically prior elements are present in (almost) every proposition: “some categories”, namely the categories of substance and attribute or cause and effect, “are”, according to Moore,

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92 Ibid., p. 153. Moore attempts to argue for this point even from within the Kantian framework, claiming that Kant cannot assert that synthesis may be described as an operation since operation (*Handlung*) is a conception deduced from a category of cause (*CPR*, B82) and cannot thus serve as a label for something prior to it, i.e. for the synthesis as an act which employs the categories. However, this accusation should also explain whether the dual use, i.e. both categorical and precategorical, is possible to be employed in the case of the “unity” (as a category and the unity of consciousness).

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid., pp. 147-148.

95 Ibid., p. 150. As Moore points out, when we are interested in the truth of a proposition, we do not need to be concerned with the process of cognition at all: “But there remains a question which Kant does not seem to ask himself. Are we here concerned at all with knowledge? Will it not be sufficient for our purpose, if we can find out what is true?” (Ibid., p. 147). However, the accusation of the excessive psychologism which lies at the very bottom of Moore’s criticism need not be accepted by Kantians who may strike back by pointing out that transcendental philosophy is not a psychological explanation, i.e. it is not an attempt to explain our psychological processes, but the transcendental conditions of the possibility of knowledge.

96 Ibid., p. 156.

“involved in every judgement”.<sup>97</sup> And he adds that “[t]he validity and necessity of these [categories], as logically presupposed in empirical judgements, would seem to be capable of proof from the mere consideration of such judgements”, i.e. without the detour through the psychological, subjective explanations.<sup>98</sup>

Within Moore’s epistemology of mind-independent propositions, the notion of logically prior elements initially plays an important role. However, the problem is that Moore never really explains what these “logically prior elements” actually amount to. Preti and Baldwin mention that the concept of logical priority “is not explained but seems to involve what Moore elsewhere calls ‘logical presupposition’”.<sup>99</sup> However, it might be objected that the notion of “logical presupposition” stays in the very same need of explanation as “logical priority”. The reluctance on Moore’s side to provide a definition of logical priority is evident also in his article “Necessity” from 1900 in which this notion reemerges. Here, Moore initially contends that it would be “desirable” to be clear about the notion of logical priority and he indicates that the relation of logical priority might be approached by the claim that “one proposition is presupposed, or implied, or involved in another”.<sup>100</sup> But he subsequently gives up on definition, pointing out elusively that “it needs, I think, only to be seen in any instance, in order to be recognized”.<sup>101</sup>

Eventually, it is merely clear that these logical prior elements or logical presuppositions are non-subjective components which are supposed to be present in most of the propositions and probably themselves have the shape of propositions.<sup>102</sup> And we can also grasp from Moore’s discussion of these elements that they have a close relation to necessity: as evident from Kant’s famous distinction between empirical and *a priori* judgements in the “Introduction” to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, necessity is, together with strict universality,

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97 Ibid., p. 147. “What Kant really shows [in the transcendental deduction] is that space and time and the categories are involved in particular propositions; and this work is of greater value than a deduction from the possibility of experience would have been” (Ibid., p. 171).

98 Ibid.

99 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, Introduction, ix.

100 Moore, 1900, p. 300.

101 Ibid., p. 301.

102 This is indicated by the fact that Moore claims that any condition which would be necessary for the truth of some proposition would probably need to have a form of another proposition: “it is difficult to see that there can be any other condition for a true proposition than some other true proposition” (Baldwin and Preti 2011, p. 156). Then, logical presuppositions could have, for instance, the form of “something is a substance, attribute, cause or effect”. Also, the notions of space and time would probably need to be formulated in the form of propositions. But Moore does not provide any details here.

defined as an unerring mark of *a priori* cognition.<sup>103</sup> Considerations about necessity, and to a much lesser degree, of universality, also form a framework for Moore's discussion of his logically prior elements.<sup>104</sup> But again, in Moore's discussion, the connection between logical priority and necessity offers more problems than solutions.

Moore claims that logical presuppositions are contained in all propositions<sup>105</sup> and he, surprisingly, proceeds to argue that this leads to all propositions themselves being necessary.<sup>106</sup> While initially this necessity is grounded upon the fact that all propositions include at least some logical presuppositions, Moore subsequently de-emphasises this point, claiming instead that propositions are necessary because they are atemporally, i.e. always, valid.<sup>107</sup> And eventually, this feature of necessity loses its importance as well and Moore ends up contending that propositions are necessary because they include necessity as one of their elements.<sup>108</sup> Contrary to initial appearances, necessity based on logical presuppositions is thus eventually entirely unimportant to Moore's project of proving the necessity of propositions. A partial evidence for this loss of importance may be gathered from the historical fact, brought to light by Baldwin, that Moore abandoned the notion of logical presuppositions almost immediately after submitting his dissertation.<sup>109</sup>

Moore's peculiar discussion of necessity can thus serve, rather than as a precisely defined argumentation, as a demonstration of his struggle to introduce, within the confines of Kantian epistemological framework, the notion of a proposition considered as a necessary connection of concepts, independent of being judged.<sup>110</sup> The truth of thus conceived proposition

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103 Kant, *CPR*, B3-B4.

104 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 135. The argument here is not very clear though. A more comprehensible rejection of universality as a distinguishing mark of *a priori* is provided in the article "Necessity" where Moore argues that some propositions, namely mathematical equations (" $5+7=12$ "), are necessary but not universal (Moore, 1900, p. 298).

105 More precisely, he argues that time is contained in absolutely all propositions, space in most of them and categories in many of them (see e.g. Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 172).

106 "All that exists is thus composed of concepts necessarily related to one another in specific manners [...]" (Ibid., p. 167).

107 Ibid., p. 171.

108 Ibid., pp. 171-173.

109 Baldwin, T. (2014). Moore's Rejection of Idealism. In: R. Rorty, ed., *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., pp. 357-374, pp. 362-363.

110 The move from the notion of a "judgement" to that of a "proposition" is explained and justified at the beginning of the second chapter of the Dissertation where Moore notes that both "mental formulation" and "an actual expression in words" should be excluded entirely from the notion of a "proposition" (Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 161). In this context, the notion of a "judgement" is discarded as useless straightaway since "it does not only denote a mental event, and hence implies activity still more openly, but is also commonly used as the name of a mental faculty" (Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 161).

should be independent of our knowing whether the proposition is true or not.<sup>111</sup> So far, however, Moore does not provide us with any sufficient argument to support this contention. He does, however, attempt to do so in the second chapter of his Dissertation whose essential parts were used to put together the article “The Nature of Judgment”. There, Moore attempts to come up with at least two arguments for his notion of a mind-independent proposition which I will discuss in the following section.

## **2.2 Proposition and Its Truth**

Moore employs several arguments which are supposed to ground his concept of a proposition. The first argument appears as early as the first page of his article “The Nature of Judgment” and is directed against Bradley’s conception of meaning of a judgement. I will attempt to demonstrate here that this argumentation is unsuccessful for two main reasons. Based on its failure, Moore is in need of a more convincing argument, and I will subsequently claim that this is hidden in Moore’s regressive line of argumentation from the end of the same article, which as I will explain revolves around the notions of truth and existence, and the criticism of a correspondence theory of truth.

### **2.2.1 The Argument against Abstractionism**

While the first chapter of Moore’s Dissertation introduces the notion of a proposition as emerging from his criticism of Kant’s concept of a judgement, the second chapter is clearly devoted to the additional agenda of explaining the proper nature of the proposition. As Moore indeed claims in the very first sentence of the second chapter “[t]he present chapter is intended to expound and support the ultimate philosophical position, which was presupposed in the last chapter”.<sup>112</sup> “Our object”, Moore adds, “will be now to show that, whatever name be given to it, that which we call a proposition is something independent of consciousness, and something of fundamental importance for philosophy”.<sup>113</sup>

The position presupposed (but definitely not properly argued for) in the first chapter was not merely that the proposition is “something independent of consciousness”, but that it enjoys this independence because it is an entity located within the world. The first argument

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111 Ibid., p. 148. For the importance of this point about the truth of a proposition being independent of proposition’s being an object of consciousness see also Ibid., Introduction, lxi.

112 Ibid., p. 161.

113 Ibid., pp. 161-162.

that Moore employs in the second chapter, which subsequently forms the famous opening of “The Nature of Judgment”, is the criticism of Bradley’s concept of ideas and meanings. I will look into it in more detail and investigate whether it presents a persuasive argument which may serve as a foundation for Moore’s intended conception of a proposition.

Moore chooses for his analysis the introductory sentence from Bradley’s 1883 book *The Principles of Logic*, namely that “[t]ruth and falsehood depend on the relation of our ideas to reality”.<sup>114</sup> He then goes on to introduce some details of Bradley’s conception of ideas and meanings in order to subject it eventually to the criticism related to incorrect abstractionism. Ideas as employed in judgements, Moore observes, do not amount in Bradley’s *Principles* to the ideas as mental occurrences, but to general, universal entities. However, these ideas used in judgement have initially been acquired from ideas as mental occurrences conceived by a process in which existence of the mental ideas was disregarded, and only (parts of) their contents were retained. Ideas in judgements are identified with meanings, “meaning” being famously defined by Bradley as consisting “of a part of the content [of mental idea] cut off, fixed by the mind, and considered apart from the existence of a sign”.<sup>115</sup> An idea in judgement thus consists in (part of) the content of a mental idea, disregarding its particular existence as mental occurrence.

It has been observed that Bradley himself intended his theory of meaning to serve as a criticism and subsequent alternative to the empiricists’ conception of ideas and judgements, according to which judgement consists of ideas considered as mental phenomena, i.e. as occurrences which appear in a particular mind at a particular time.<sup>116</sup> Bradley rejects this position, contending that ideas in judgement cannot be conceived of as particular mental occurrences, since they need to present something with universality and generality.<sup>117</sup> On this basis, he introduces his previously summarized account of ideas in judgements as derived from mental ideas by disregarding their existence. Moore indeed acknowledges the legitimacy of Bradley’s criticism in this respect: Bradley’s notion of an idea in judgement as a “universal meaning” appears to Moore “conclusive, as against those, of whom there have been too many,

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114 Bradley, F. H. (1883). *The Principles of Logic*, 2 Volumes. London: Kegan Paul, Book. I, Chapter I. §2, p. 6.

115 Ibid., §4, 4.

116 For further details concerning Bradley’s criticism of empiricist theory of judgement, see Hylton, P. (1990). *Russell, Idealism, and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 59-64.

117 Bradley, 1883, §4, p. 7ff. An idea as a symbol “[n]o longer can be said to exist for its own sake, its individuality is lost in its universal meaning”, in: Ibid., p. 8.



who have treated the idea as a mental state”.<sup>118</sup> However, Bradley is not finally safe from Moore’s criticism either, since despite his diagnosis of the empiricist view, Moore considers Bradley’s conception of ideas in judgements to be “infected by the same error as theirs [i.e. as empiricists’]”.<sup>119</sup>

Moore’s criticism, based on which he denounces Bradley’s account as similarly liable to misconceived notion of meaning as empiricists’, targets the process by which the ideas as employed in judgements are gathered from the ideas as mental occurrences. In this process, Moore founds the infinite regress which in his eyes eventually discredits Bradley’s notion of ideas as meanings. This regress is generated, Moore contends, within Bradley’s above-summarized description of ideas in judgments as universal meanings which are derived from ideas as mental occurrences. Regress arises, Moore is persuaded, in this process because in order to know the content of the idea employed in judgement, I already need to know the idea as mental occurrence from which this content is to be taken over into the idea used in judgement. However, and this is the crucial step of the argument, to know the idea as mental occurrence, from which the idea in judgement is derived, is to produce a judgement about this idea, i.e. I need to have some previous idea about this idea as mental occurrence.<sup>120</sup>

Moore’s thought behind this is that I need to have some knowledge of the idea, from which I intend to preserve only (part of) its content in the idea within judgement.<sup>121</sup> This step however leads according to Moore immediately to an infinite regress since in order to know the content of the initial idea as a mental occurrence, I need to employ another idea related to this content, while the content of this further idea is again only cognized by means of another idea etc. *ad infinitum*.<sup>122</sup> Eventually, thus, I would need to be in possession of an infinite number of “psychological judgements”, i.e. judgements about my mental ideas, and the impossibility of this infinite “psychological knowledge” disproves the theory, since if accepted, we would need to claim that we have no knowledge at all, since we got stuck at the unattainable knowledge of judgements in the realm of mental ideas.<sup>123</sup>

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118 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, pp. 162-163.

119 Ibid., p. 163.

120 Ibid., p. 164.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.



The regress Moore describes can be thus summarized as follows:

1. In order to know the content of the idea in judgement (meaning), I need to know the content of the mental idea ( $MI_1$ ) from which the idea in judgement has been derived.
2. But to know the content of this mental idea, I need to produce another mental idea ( $MI_2$ ) about this content.
3. But to know the content of this other mental idea ( $MI_2$ ), I need to produce another mental idea ( $MI_3$ ) etc. *ad infinitum*.

Moore thus interpreters Bradley as advocating a “refined psychologism”<sup>124</sup> and abstractionism, according to which the idea in judgement is an abstraction, cut off, and thus abstracted, from the mental idea. Based on that, Bradley is, according to Moore, susceptible to the same philosophical mistake of grounding his theory of judgment on the notion of mental ideas as the empiricists, who came under his own criticism. Moore’s commentators Preti and Baldwin present Moore’s argument as “a somewhat unsatisfactory episode”,<sup>125</sup> which echoes Baldwin previous similarly dismissive treatment of Moore’s criticism.<sup>126</sup> This may seem appropriate since Bradley himself expressly stated his discontent with Moore’s rendering of his argument in a letter to Moore. There, Bradley pointed out that he did not intend to claim that we are in need of a particular psychological judgement in our derivation of an idea in judgement from a mentally conceived idea.<sup>127</sup>

On the other hand, I think that Moore is right in claiming that Bradley’s theory indeed is unintuitive: “[i]t is”, as he states, “difficult to suppose that knowledge can be explained as the attribution of a part of a content, of the whole of which I am *ex hypothesi* utterly ignorant”.<sup>128</sup> It is indeed difficult to imagine that we know the content of some idea, but not the idea from which it has been derived. However, Bradley still could have opposed that the exposition of

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124 Baldwin, T. (1999). *G. E. Moore – The Arguments of Philosophers*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 14

125 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, Introduction, xxviii.

126 Baldwin, 1999, p. 14.

127 In this letter, Bradley writes that “[t]he first [argument] seems to be that the separation of meaning from existence required for judgement presupposes a previous judgement. Well certainly it may do so – a psychological judgement, that is, but then again it may not and often does not ... I suppose that my phrase ‘cut off’ etc. has been taken to imply a going about to cut off and therefore a previous idea. I never meant this ... But I admit my language was loose”. Bradley’s letter is to be found in Moore’s Archive in Cambridge University Library (Add. MS 8830 8B/21/1) and is here quoted from Baldwin and Preti, 2011, Introduction, xxix.

128 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 164.

unintuitiveness does not amount to the refutation of the theory.<sup>129</sup>

Essential, however, is the fact that even if Moore had succeeded in disproving Bradley's theory, he would still not have achieved his main goal: to demonstrate that a proposition is a mind-independent entity *located in the world*. To arrive at this conclusion, he still is in need of an argument designed directly to ground this notion of a proposition. And it is precisely this kind of argument, I believe, that Moore presents in the concluding parts of "The Nature of Judgment", toward which I will turn my attention now.

### 2.2.2 The Argument Against Correspondence Theory

To prove that "the world is formed of concepts"<sup>130</sup>, Moore employs an argument aimed at exposing the infinite regress involved in the attempt to define the truth of a proposition based on the relation of a correspondence. On the basis of this argument, he wishes to show that it is his own conception, i.e. the concept of a proposition as a part of the world, which presents the only correct way to account for the nature of a proposition and its truth. In many respects, Moore's argument, and especially its first part, is strikingly similar to more famous, even if chronologically later argument against the possibility of defining truth which Frege formulated at the beginning of his article "Der Gedanke" ("The Thought").<sup>131</sup> I will here introduce Moore's argument alongside Frege's, mainly because Frege's rendition of the argument is much more comprehensible than Moore's quite obscure account. I hope that by using Frege's rendition of the argument, I also will shed some more light on Moore's version of it.

In what follows, we will see that in both philosophers the argument has two parts. The first attempts to show that the truth of a judgement or a proposition is undefinable by means of the notion of a correspondence (of our ideas or judgements and their referents) and the second one is designed to prove that truth (of a judgement or a proposition) is not definable *at all*. While the first part of the argument is, I will claim, similar in Moore and Frege, in the second part, Moore proceeds in a radically different way than Frege to show that truth is an undefinable

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129 The very same move, i.e. the reluctance to conclude from the difficulty of some theory to its inaccuracy, is employed by Moore when criticising Kant's notion of space, see Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 144. And also, the same kind of objection may be used against Moore's own criticism of Kant, since we may point out that the fact that Kant did not prove the subjective nature of *a priori* presuppositions does not automatically mean it cannot be proved.

130 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 168.

131 Frege, G. (1918). *Der Gedanke. Eine logische Untersuchung. Beiträge zur Philosophie des deutschen Idealismus*, I, pp. 58—77. Trans. as Frege, G. *The Thought*. (1997). In: M. Beaney, ed., *The Frege Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 325-345.

notion – for Moore, the notion of truth as undefinable is intertwined with the concept of a proposition as a part of the world.

To begin with, let's concentrate on what I take to be the first part of both Frege's and Moore's arguments, namely their criticism of the definition of truth in terms of a correspondence theory. At the beginning of the article "The Thought", Frege considers whether it is possible to define truth of a thought based on its correspondence with reality, and proceeds by arguing against this possibility. To begin with, Frege claims that there is no such thing as a complete or perfect correspondence between a thought on the one side and reality on the other.<sup>132</sup> If there were, the supposed correspondence would collapse into an identity.<sup>133</sup>

Frege presumes here something which could be very well denied by the proponents of a correspondence theory, namely that correspondence allows gradation, i.e. that there can be less or more perfect level of correspondence, while there cannot be any levels of truth.<sup>134</sup> On this assumption, it indeed seems that the truth of a thought cannot reside in its correspondence with reality, since the thought has to be true or false but, at the same time, it can only imperfectly corresponds to reality, since the complete correspondence would amount to its identity with reality. There is, however, another option to be considered, namely that truth of a thought would reside in a partial correspondence with reality – in this event, we could say that a thought is true if it corresponds to reality *in a certain respect*.<sup>135</sup> And it is precisely this modified version of a correspondence theory that Frege attacks in his famous argument, which runs as follows:

"Truth does not admit of more or less. – But could we not maintain that there is truth when there is correspondence in a certain respect [*in einer gewissen Hinsicht*]? But which respect? For in that case what ought we to do so as to decide whether something is true? We should have to inquire whether it is *true* that an idea and a reality, say, correspond in the specified respect. And then we should be confronted by a question of the same kind, and the game could begin again. So the attempted explanation of truth as correspondence breaks down."<sup>136</sup>

To summarize the argument, let's begin with the presumption that we can define the

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132 Frege initially (Ibid., pp. 326-327) formulates the argument for "an idea" or "a picture", but he eventually adds that the same holds for a thought as well (Ibid., p. 328).

133 Ibid., p. 327.

134 For the possible criticism, see Dodd, J. (2000). *An Identity Theory of Truth*. London: MacMillan., p. 117.

135 In this case, both truth and *partial* correspondence would be something that do not allow gradation and proposition's truth could thus amount to this partial correspondence.

136 Frege, 1918, p. 327; emphasis in the original.

truth of a thought and that we can do so in terms of a correspondence.<sup>137</sup> In that case, the definition of truth of a thought would be as follows: “a thought is true iff it corresponds to reality (in a certain respect)”. Thus, to enquire whether a thought is true amounts to enquiring whether it corresponds to reality. But to enquire whether it corresponds to reality, we have to enquire whether it is true that it corresponds to reality, i.e. whether the thought that the thought corresponds to reality corresponds to reality etc. *ad infinitum*.

We may schematically summarize the argument as follows:

*Definition of truth of a thought:*

$t$  is true iff  $t$  is C (“ $t$ ” standing for a thought; “C” standing for “corresponding to reality”)

(a) to decide whether  $t$  is true, one must decide whether  $t$  is C.

(b) to decide whether  $t$  is C, one must decide whether it is true that  $t$  is C, i.e. whether the thought that  $t$  is C is C.

(c) to decide whether the the thought that  $t$  is C is C is to decide whether it is true that the thought that  $t$  is C is C, i.e. whether the thought that the thought that  $t$  is C is C is C. etc. *ad infinitum*.<sup>138</sup>

Alternatively, we may also render Frege’s argument as pointing out the circularity in the definition of truth. In this case, the argument states that when we accept the definition of truth of a thought in terms of correspondence, we can always ask, in any case in which this definition is used, whether it is true that this definition holds and, thus, we will be moving in a circle, since the *definiendum* ( $t$  is true) is presupposed in the *definiens* ( $t$  is C).<sup>139</sup>

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137 I switched here from the “idea” mentioned in the previous quotation to the “thought” – for the explanation, see note 132.

138 For various renderings of this argument as regressive see Kremer, M. (2000). Judgment and Truth in Frege. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 38(4), pp. 549-581, p. 553; Dummett, M. (1973). *Frege – Philosophy of Language*. London: Duckworth, pp. 442-443; Carruthers, P. (1981). Frege’s Regress, *Proceeding of the Aristotelian Society*, 82, pp. 17-32, p. 17; Soames, S. (1999). *Understanding Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 25.

139 This rendering of the argument is less widespread, but is present, for instance, in the summary of the argument by Verena Mayer: “[w]hatever criterion of truth we would accept, in any special case we have to ask if it is true that the criterion can be applied and so ‘we should by going round in the circle’”; “if we would stipulate that truth consists in a congruence between thought and reality, or representation and represented object, we would have to decide in a concrete case if the congruence holds, and thus the definition would be circular” (Mayer, V. (2007). Evidence, Judgment and Truth. In: D. Greimann, ed., *Essays on Frege’s Conception of Truth*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 175-197, p. 178 and 193).

Schematically, the argument looks as follows:

*Definition of truth of a thought:*

$t$  is true iff  $t$  is C (“ $t$ ” standing for a thought; “C” standing for “corresponding to reality”)

(a) in every particular use of this definition, we need to ask whether this definition holds, i.e. whether it is true that  $t$  is true iff  $t$  is C.

(b) the definition is thus circular since the *definiendum* ( $t$  is true) is presupposed in the *definiens* ( $t$  is C).

The presence of the regress or, in the alternative reading, of the circularity in the definition of truth leads Frege to the conclusion that the definition of truth in terms of correspondence is unattainable. But, moreover, he additionally claims that *any* attempt to define truth is bound to failure as well. For this, a slightly different argument is needed:

“And any other attempt to define truth also breaks down. For in a definition certain characteristics [*gewisse Merkmale*] would have to be specified. And in application to any particular case the question would always arise whether it were *true* that the characteristics were present. So we should be going round in a circle [*So drehte man sich im Kreise*].”<sup>140</sup>

Here again, let’s begin with the presupposition that we can define the truth of a thought. Now, we do not attempt to define it in terms of correspondence, but we only suppose that truth can be *somehow* defined by claiming that for a thought to be true, it has to have certain (further unspecified) characteristics. In that case, the definition of truth would be as follows: “a thought is true iff it has certain characteristics”. To inquire into whether a thought is true amounts to the investigation of whether it has those characteristics. But to inquire into whether it has those characteristics, we have to investigate whether it is true that it has those characteristics, i.e. whether the thought that the thought has certain characteristics has certain characteristics etc.

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<sup>140</sup> Frege, 1918, p. 327, emphasis in the original. This argument is rendered as regressive by those who prefer the regressive reading of the first argument. Generally, also, both arguments are rendered as one argument or as the same reasoning (Dummett, 1973, pp. 442-443, Carruthers, 1981, p. 17).

Again, the argument may be summarized as follows:

*Definition of truth of a thought:*

$t$  is true iff  $t$  has C (“C” standing for “certain characteristics”)

(a) to decide whether  $t$  is true, one must decide whether  $t$  has C.

(b) to decide whether  $t$  has C, one must decide whether it is true that  $t$  has C, i.e. whether the thought that  $t$  has C has C.

(c) to decide whether the thought that  $t$  has C has C is to decide whether it is true that the thought that  $t$  has C has C, i.e. whether the thought that the thought that  $t$  has C has C has C etc. *ad infinitum*.

Or again, if we interpret the argument as pointing out the circularity in definition, it states that when we accept *any* definition of truth of a thought, we can ask in any case of its usage whether it is true that this definition holds:

*Definition of truth of a thought:*

$t$  is true iff  $t$  has C (“ $t$ ” standing for a thought; “C” standing for “certain characteristics”)

(a) in every particular use of this definition, we need to ask whether this definition holds, i.e. whether it is true that  $t$  is true iff  $t$  has C.

(b) the definition is circular since the *definiendum* ( $t$  is true) is presupposed in the *definiens* ( $t$  has C).

Thus, Frege concludes, based on the two arguments presented, that the content of the word “true” is unique and indefinable (*einzigartig und undefinierbar*).<sup>141</sup>

There are thus two arguments in Frege against the possibility of defining truth – against its definition in terms of correspondence (of a thought with reality) and against its definition *tout court*. In Moore’s “The Nature of Judgement”, I will argue, we can find two arguments, or

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141 Frege, 1918, p. 327. Frege’s arguments against the possibility of defining truth have been subject to many critical assessments. The main line of the interpretative engagement with the regressive form of the arguments is due to Dummett (1973, p. 443ff.) and is repeated, in a similar fashion, by Soames (1999, pp. 26-27) and Künne (2003, p. 131). Dummett claims that Frege’s regressive argument did not prove the impossibility of any definition of truth, but succeeded (only) in proving that any admissible definition of truth is subject to certain constraints. These constraints are, Dummett claims, encapsulated in the “equivalence thesis”, i.e. in the claim that “it is true that  $t$ ” is equivalent to “ $t$ ”. The point of this claim resides in the fact that “ $t$ ” and “it is true that  $t$ ” are considered as logically equivalent (i.e. as having the same sense) whereby the infinite regress is effectively avoided.

two sections of one argument, as well. I will attempt to show here that their intention may be comprehended as similar to Frege's: both Frege and Moore proceed from the argument against a correspondence theory of truth to the critique of any attempt to define truth. The difference to be found in the arguments resides primarily in their second parts, which attempt to prove that truth is completely undefinable. Let's thus proceed to an inquiry into both Moore's arguments. The first argument reads as follows:

“It is [...] impossible that truth should depend on a relation to existents or to an existent, since the proposition by which it is so defined must itself be true, and the truth of this can certainly not be established, without a vicious circle, by exhibiting its dependence on an existent.”<sup>142</sup>

What is discussed here is the impossibility of defining truth of a proposition in terms of the dependence of this truth on a relation to an existent or existents.<sup>143</sup> And it is claimed that this truth is undefinable in this fashion since the proposition by which it would have been so defined would have needed, itself, to be true, while this truth cannot be further established without a vicious circle. Let's thus again begin by asking what the definition would be if, *per impossibile*, truth of a proposition could be defined. Then, a proposition *p* would be true iff it had a relation to an existent. We thus have a definition of truth claiming that “*p* is true iff *p* has a relation to an existent (*pRe*)”. I suggest that the “it” in the sentence “the proposition by which it is so defined” amounts to the truth of *p*, while the whole “proposition by which it is so defined” amounts to the *definiens* “*p* has a relation to an existent”. If so, the subsequent step of the argument is very similar to Frege's: the *definiens* (“*p* has a relation to an existent”) must itself be true.

At this point, we may use Frege's above-summarized argument to disentangle Moore's argumentation. Frege would conclude that the definition of truth (of a thought in his case, or of a proposition in Moore's) is circular, since the *definiendum* (“*p* is true”) is already presupposed in the *definiens* (“*p* has a relation to an existent”). Moore claims that *definiens* (*pRe*) must itself be true and that “the truth of this [*definiens*] can certainly not be established, without a vicious circle, by exhibiting its dependence on an existent”. Thus, Moore claims, it includes a vicious circle to define truth of the *definiens* (*pRe*) by exhibiting its dependence on an existent: it is circular to say that “it is true that *pRe* iff *pRe*”, since the *definiens* (*pRe*) is included in the

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<sup>142</sup> Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 167.

<sup>143</sup> In the context of the critique of correspondence theory, the existents amount to the parts of reality to which our judgements refer.



*definiendum* (it is true that  $pRe$ ).

*Definition of truth of a proposition:*

$p$  is true iff  $pRe$  (“ $p$ ” standing for “a proposition”, “ $Re$ ” for “having a relation to an existent”)

(a) to decide whether  $p$  is true, one must decide whether  $pRe$ .

(b) to decide whether the proposition has a relation to an existent ( $pRe$ ), one must decide whether it is true that  $pRe$ , i.e. whether the proposition that  $pRe$  is itself  $R$ -related to  $e$ .

(c) but to establish whether “the proposition that  $pRe$  is true” with reference to “ $pRe$ ” is circular.

What we thus have so far is Moore’s contention that if we attempt to define the truth of a proposition in terms of its dependence on a relation to an existent, we are trapped in the circular definition; and therefore truth is not non-circularly definable in this way. I attempted to comprehend Moore’s reasoning against the background of Frege’s argument – their similarity can be also seen in the fact that Moore’s argument may be rendered as pointing out the regress in the attempted definition of truth:

*Definition of truth of a proposition:*

$p$  is true iff  $pRe$

(a) to decide whether  $p$  is true, one must decide whether  $pRe$ .

(b) to decide whether the proposition has a relation to an existent ( $pRe$ ), one must decide whether it is true that  $pRe$ , i.e. whether the proposition that  $pRe$  is itself  $R$ -related to  $e$ .

(c) to decide whether the proposition that  $pRe$  is itself  $R$ -related to  $e$ , one must decide whether it is true that  $pRe$  is itself  $R$ -related to  $e$ , i.e. whether the the proposition that the  $pRe$  is  $R$ -related to  $e$  is itself  $R$ -related to  $e$  etc. *ad infinitum*.

If we observe Moore’s argument from the viewpoint of comparison with Frege’s two-step argument, we may also very well suppose that what we could expect to follow, if truth is to be absolutely undefinable, is the extension of the argument to the effect that *no* non-circular definition of truth is feasible. What Moore offers as the second step of his argument may be considered as this extension, but it differs essentially from Frege’s second step. Instead of Frege’s criticism of the definition “ $p$  is true if  $p$  has certain characteristics”, Moore introduces



a different kind of regress and circularity. The part of “The Nature of Judgement” which I label as the second step of Moore’s argument reads as follows:

“Our result is then as follows: That a judgement is universally a necessary combination of concepts, equally necessary whether it be true or false. That it must be either true or false, but that its truth or falsehood cannot depend on its relation to anything else whatever, reality, for instance, or the world in space and time. For both of these must be supposed to exist, in some sense, if the truth of our judgement is to depend upon them; and then it turns out that the truth of our judgement depends not on them [on reality or world in time and space], but on the judgment that they, being such and such, exist. But this judgement cannot, in its turn, depend on anything else, for its truth and falsehood: its truth or its falsehood must be immediate properties of its own, not dependent upon any relation it may have to something else. And, if this be so, we have removed all reason for the supposition that the truth and falsehood of other judgements are not equally independent.”<sup>144</sup>

What Moore claims here is that the truth (or falsity) of any proposition does not depend on reality, but on the proposition that reality exists.<sup>145</sup> The truth of this proposition that reality exists, however, cannot depend on anything else; truth is rather an “immediate property” of this proposition. And *all* propositions are equally independent of reality, since they all depend only on this proposition (that reality exists) which is, in itself, independent of a relation to reality.

Now an essential question arises about the nature and purpose of the introduction of this “ultimate” proposition “that reality exists”. It seems that we have here a regress which arises from the fact that even if the truth of any particular proposition does not depend on a particular existent, it may depend on reality as a complex of existents. Interpreted in this way, we may assert that the second argument serves as the extension of the first argument: we consider the truth of a proposition to be dependent on reality and we are thus in a position to have a definition “*p* is true if *p* depends on reality”. This definition is clearly analogous to the first attempted definition, only a particular existent is replaced by the whole of reality. Based on this similarity, the regress and also circularity in definition may be generated here:

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144 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 173.

145 Moore returns here to the notion of a “judgement”, instead of a “proposition”. It may be due to the fact that he summarizes the stance he argued for in the whole article and compares it with the initially introduced treatment of judgement within an idealist tradition. Also, I render here, for the sake of simplicity, the “reality” and the empirical “world” in a space and time simply as broadly conceived “reality” (possibly including both existents and beings in Moore’s ontology).

*Definition of truth of a proposition:*

$p$  is true iff  $pRr$  (“ $Rr$ ” standing for “has a relation to reality”)

(a) to decide whether  $p$  is true, one must decide whether  $pRr$ .

(b) to decide whether  $pRr$ , one must decide whether it is true that  $pRr$ , i.e. whether the proposition that  $pRr$  is  $R$ -related to  $r$ .

*Circularity:*

(c<sub>1</sub>) but to establish whether “the proposition that  $pRr$  is true” with reference to “ $pRr$ ” is circular.

*Regress:*

(c<sub>2</sub>) to decide whether the proposition that  $pRr$  is  $R$ -related to  $r$  is to decide whether it is true that the proposition that  $pRr$  is  $R$ -related to  $r$ , i.e. whether the proposition that the that  $pRr$  is  $R$ -related to  $r$  is  $R$ -related to  $r$  etc. *ad infinitum*.

In the case of Moore’s first argument, the possibility of defining a proposition’s truth as its dependence on a relation to an existent was denied. However, this denial does not seem to be sufficient since we are led to another, structurally similar definition of truth ( $pRr$ ) which again leads to circularity in definition and to the regress. Moore however claims that the regress and circularity ensuing from the fact that truth would be dependent on a relation to reality (as a whole) may be stopped since all propositions depend, in the end, not on reality but on a proposition that reality exists. The truth of this proposition (“that reality exists”), however, does not depend on anything else, since everything that could possibly ground its truth (the total reality) is already internal to it. Thus, the truth of this proposition cannot consist in a relation to anything else external to it.

The crucial point of the argument resides in the startling claim that we may define the existence of reality as the proposition that reality exists. The reason for this surprising claim rests, in turn, in the fact that by formulating the existence of reality in the form of a proposition, we may claim that this proposition is *true* and that its truth cannot depend on anything else, simply because there is nothing left on which its truth would depend, since the whole of reality was already captured just by this proposition that reality exists. It is hardly necessary to stress that this move of identifying a proposition with reality would be question-begging against the

idealist conception Moore is here aiming to refute which distinguish firmly between truth-bearers (propositions, or judgements) and what makes them true (reality). The identification would also be incomprehensible to Frege (as well as to many others).

The comparison with Frege reveals an important point, namely that no similar interruption of an infinite regress seems to be possible within the Fregean framework of sentences and thoughts. There seems to be no way of asserting that we can interrupt an infinite regress because we have reached the totality of thoughts or sentences. Even if we entertain a thought or a sentence that reality exists we can still maintain that the truth of this thought depends on the thought that it is true that reality exists. In other words, there is no conceivable limit at which we could stop when the regress is generated in the realm of thoughts or sentences, simply because we do not consider those realms to be limited in the way we see the world as a limited whole. It is thus merely because we consider the world as a limited whole that there seems to be a conceivable limit of the regress in case propositions are identified with the constituents of reality in the Moorean sense: in this case, we may say that the proposition that reality exists almost literally includes the whole of reality and that there is thus nothing remaining to underpin the truth of this ultimate proposition that reality exists. Moore thus stopped the looming infinite regress by “transforming” reality into the proposition that “reality exists”.

I attempted to summarize Moore’s two arguments which both have one identical aim: to prove that a proposition is to be conceived as a mind-independent entity which forms a part of the world (or, in the case of the all-embracing proposition that “it is true that reality exists”, the world as a whole). Were, however, these arguments persuasive? As I have already pointed out, the first argument against Bradley is rather weak: it does not conclusively prove that Bradley is wrong (but only that his account is non-trivial or counter-intuitive). Moreover, even disregarding this shortcoming, this argument could *only* show that a proposition is a mind-independent object of judgement and not that it is to be conceived of as a part of the world. The second argument is more promising in this context, since it really ends up with the conclusion that a proposition is a worldly entity. Still, even if I consider the second argument as a stronger one, there remain difficulties in accepting it, namely the fact that it is very controversial to accept the step in which Moore claims that the existence of the world may be reformulated in the form of the proposition that the world exists. Moore only asserts that it is possible, but the question remains of why such a strange possibility should be allowed for.

Eventually, then, neither of Moore's arguments for his notion of a proposition as a mind-independent part of the world seems to me persuasive. Moreover, there are other problems surrounding this notion, most obviously that as Moore presents it, the notion of a proposition is extremely vague. What does Moore tell us about propositions? Little more than they may be either true or false and that their truth or falsity cannot be defined.<sup>146</sup> It seems from Moore's account that a proposition can be formed by *any* number of constituents (concepts) and a relation, while no further details of the propositional composition are provided.<sup>147</sup>

This account is extremely undeveloped. We need to ask how it is possible to guarantee that the concepts, from which a proposition is composed, are "assembled" into a meaningful unity. This is the kind of question that is seriously taken over only by Russell with his considerations about propositional constituents (terms) and propositional unity. In the following section, I will thus turn to Russell, attempting to show how he enriched Moore's notion of a proposition. I will explain the problems he took over in accepting this peculiar notion and how he attempted to overcome them with his gradually changing and evolving conception of propositions and judgements.

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146 "What kind of relation makes a proposition true, what false, cannot be further defined, but must be immediately recognized" (Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 166).

147 This is especially clear from Moore's sentence to the effect that "[a] proposition is constituted by any number of concepts, together with a specific relation between them" (Ibid).

### 3. Russell's Theory of Judgement

When Russell, in his autobiography, describes his and Moore's philosophical revolt against idealism, he writes that he "[f]elt it, in fact, as a great liberation, as if [he] had escaped from a hot-house on to a wind-swept headland".<sup>148</sup> The philosophical core of the revolt Russell and Moore initiated may be seen in their notion of a mind-independent proposition which forms a part of the world. This notion of a proposition represents a critical stance of both philosophers to what they considered an overly mentalistic notion of a judgment presented reputedly by Kant and his idealistic followers. The aim of this chapter is first to consider (in 3.1 and 3.2) the concept of a proposition Russell brought forward in his attack against idealism and the difficulties that it faced. Then secondly, in 3.3, I wish to illuminate the philosophical motives for Russell's abandonment of his early theory of propositions and his subsequent move towards his famous multiple relation theory of judgment; and to indicate which difficulties this theory faces in turn; and finally to assess how it stands in comparison to Kant's theory of judgement.

#### 3.1 Russell and Lotze – Being as Mind-Independent

While Brentano and his disciples began levelling various criticisms against idealism on the Continent, Moore and Russell did the same in Britain. Moore wrote his *Dissertation* on – or rather against – Kantian idealism, while Russell addressed various topics from Kant, an absolute idealist F. H. Bradley or by Kantianism partially influenced German philosopher Hermann Lotze.<sup>149</sup> In the *opus magnum* of his early period, the *Principles of Mathematics*, Russell, while presenting the German philosopher Hermann Lotze as a Kantian philosopher, criticised his concepts of being and existence for being overly mentalistic.

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148 Russell, B. (1959a). *My Philosophical Development*. London and New York: Routledge. Reprinted in 1995, London: Routledge, p. 48.

149 For Russell's discussion of Lotze, see chapter 51 ("Logical Arguments against Points") in Russell, B. (1903). *Principles of Mathematics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in 2010, London: Routledge, §§ 423-431; for Kant see Ibid., chapter 52 ("Kant's Theory of Space"), §§ 432-436; for Bradley Ibid, e.g. §§ 47, 51. However, it is misleading to describe Lotze simply as a Kantian philosopher; his philosophy is indeed rooted in the idealist tradition, but was also influenced by other figures, for instance German philosopher and psychologist F. Herbart. More precisely, we can define Lotze as an opponent of excessive naturalism popular in Germany around the 1950s and several subsequent decades. In it also in this context, that the significance of Lotze's notion of an "objective validity" (*die objektive Gültigkeit*) becomes apparent; see also footnote 159. For a general overview of Lotze's philosophy see Beiser, F. C. (1913). *Late German Idealism: Trendelenburg & Lotze*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 127-131.

While Russell followed in Moore's footsteps by accepting the latter's notion of a proposition, he also offered his own argument against the idealistic account of being as mentally dependent. To this end Russell focused his attention on the account of being presented in Lotze's *Metaphysics*<sup>150</sup>. There Lotze distinguished between three kinds of being. Firstly, there is a kind of being which belongs to the things which exist outside in the world and which interact with other things; this is "the existence of a thing which can act". Secondly, there is a being as a "mere validity of truth". And thirdly, there is being as "the mental representation in us".<sup>151</sup> When Russell summarizes and argues against Lotze's conception of being in the chapter "Logical Arguments Against Points" in *The Principles of Mathematics*<sup>152</sup>, he renders those three Lotzean types of being as follows:

(1) "the being of things, which consists in activity or the power to produce effects",

(2) "the validity of a truth" and

(3) "the being which belongs to the contents of our representations".<sup>153</sup>

In this summary, however, Russell misinterprets the Lotzean initial distinction between kinds of being. From many passages in Lotze's *Logic*, we know that he ascribes "validity" to the contents of our representations.<sup>154</sup> Thus, when Lotze labels the second kind of being as "the validity of truth", he is pointing to the being which he ascribes to the ideal contents of our representations. Russell, on the other hand, presents the second kind of being vaguely as "the mere validity of truth", while the being of ideal content – "the being which belongs to the contents of our representations", in Russell's words – is introduced only as the third kind of being which Lotze initially described as the being of "mental representation in us". But Lotze's

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150 Lotze, H. (1879). *System der Philosophie: Metaphysik: Drei Bücher*. Transl. as Lotze, H. (1884). *Metaphysics: In Three Books*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

151 Ibid., §109, p. 187.

152 Russell, 1903, pp. 451-461.

153 Ibid., §427, p. 455.

154 See e.g. Lotze, H. (1874). *System der Philosophie: Logik; drei Bücher, vom Denken, vom Untersuchen und vom Erkennen*. Leipzig: Hirzel; transl. as Lotze, H. (1884). *Logic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, chapter "The World of Ideas" (Book III, Ch. 2), particularly §§ 316-321; chapter "Real and Formal Significance of Logical Acts" (Book III, Ch. IV), particularly §§338-345 and chapter "The A Priori Truths" (Book III, Ch. V), particularly §§346-349. Lotze also speaks about a proposition which *is* in the way that it *holds*, i.e. that is valid, see e.g. Lotze's *Logik*, §316. p. 439. However, propositions are not for Lotze non-mental, objectively existing entities as they are for Russell and Moore. For Lotze, propositions are claims about the validity of ideal concepts, see e.g. Ibid., §321, p. 448.

“mental representation in us” is not supposed to be the ideal content of that representation, since that content was already connected with the being as validity.

Instead the being of mental representations is for Lotze that of mere psychical appearances occurring within us. This reading is demonstrated by Lotze’s explicit claim that mental representation is “in us”, making it plain that “being in us” is for this kind of being an essential characteristic. The ideal contents, whose being was described in the second point, might also be described, in a different sense, as ‘in us’, since they are the contents of the representations which are “in us”. But this second kind of being (i.e. of the ideal contents) is rather peculiar in that even though it is “in us”, it nevertheless has a validity which is independent of the particular subjects in which it occurs.<sup>155</sup> Thus, while Russell distinguished supposedly Lotzean beings (1) of things, (2) of truth and (3) of the contents of our representations, we should rather say that those beings are properly described as being (1) of things, (2) of the contents of our representations and (3) of the representations as psychological occurrences in us.

The third Lotzean being, i.e. the being of mental representations, is not discussed by Russell at all but it is obvious that, if he accepts it at all, he does not ascribe any importance to it. Russell simply does not provide any account of the mental activity of judging; he passes over this issue in silence. Further on, he concentrates exclusively on a critique of the notion of the “content” of an act of judgement (i.e. on Lotze’s second kind of being). The supposed being of the contents of mental representations, as Russell introduces the discussion, is “a subject upon which there exists everywhere the greatest confusion”.<sup>156</sup> The criticism Lotze comes under in connection to this is based on Russell’s symptomatic understanding of transcendental idealism as a doctrine which claims that we somehow endow with existence the contents of our own representations.

Russell claims that every form of Kantianism includes a characteristic belief, also supposedly expressed by Lotze, that the “mind is in some sense creative”, i.e. “that what it intuitively acquires, in some sense, an existence which it would not have if it were not intuited”.<sup>157</sup> Kantianism itself is therefore characterized by the general presupposition “that propositions which are believed solely because the mind is so made that we cannot but believe them may yet

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155 Lotze, 1874, §338, p. 479.

156 Russell, 1903, §427, p. 456.

157 Ibid.



be true in virtue of our belief”.<sup>158</sup> This account of transcendentalism is excessively subjectivistic, but Russell's arguments against it at least bring us straight to the point of his criticism of the Lotzean multivocal conception of being.

What is essential is Russell's conviction that the creativity or activity of mind emphasized within transcendentalism amounts to the assertion that what is intuited can acquire a special kind of existence just by being intuited. The consequence for Russell is that – since we can endow something with existence by thinking it – we can claim that what is intuited is entitled to the specific kind of existence peculiar to the intuited content. It is only by accepting this view, Russell supposes, that Lotze could have come to the conclusion that there is not only existence of things in the world, but also of the contents of our mental representations.<sup>159</sup>

The core of Russell's critique is that Lotze is imposing a purportedly exhaustive distinction between the temporal existence of real things and the existence of ideal contents which neglects what Russell describes as being *simpliciter*. Specifically, Russell imagines Lotze's train of thought as follows: There is a being which is expressed in the existence of external things (Lotze's first being). But then, we observe that there are some entities which nevertheless cannot be conceived of as things which have external, temporal existence: “numbers, relations, and many other objects of thought”.<sup>160</sup> Since they do not have existence of external things, we are forced to suppose, if we want to account for the fact that we nevertheless can think them, that they have being due to the fact that we think them:

“Mised by neglect of being, people have supposed that what does not exist is nothing. Seeing that numbers, relations, and many other objects of thought, do not exist outside the mind, they have supposed that the thoughts in which we think of these entities actually create their own objects.”<sup>161</sup>

Russell is nevertheless convinced that this line of thought is unacceptable since the conclusion drawn from the temporal non-existence of some things to their mental existence is inadmissible – the non-existence of something as an external thing does not imply its

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158 Ibid. Cf. also Russell, B. (1900). *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992, pp. 16-17: “The view, implied in this theory, and constituting a large part of Kant's Copernican revolution, that propositions may acquire truth by being believed [...]”. As Russell himself notes in the footnote to this summary, he is “aware that this is not an orthodox statement of the Kantian theory” (Ibid., p. 17).

159 Russell's ascription of subjectivism seems to be inappropriate precisely against Lotze who introduced into the post-Kantian philosophical discussions to notion of “objective validity” (*die objektive Gültigkeit*) - see Lotze, 1874, especially Book III, chapters 2-4. For the same emphasis see also Schaar, 2013a, p. 9.

160 Russell, 1903, §427, p. 457.

161 Ibid., emphasis mine.



(in)existence “in the mind” as a (part of) mental content, created somehow by the mind itself. On the other hand, however, it is to be admitted that there somehow *are* such things as relations, numbers etc., i.e. entities which we are reluctant to count among “actually existing” things. With the introduction of being as an alternative to external existence, the importance of mental existence is lost: what does not exist, nonetheless *is*, and it *is*, Russell emphasizes, independently of our thinking it. This thinking does not add anything to things which either are or exist and there is thus only being *simpliciter* and existence *simpliciter*:

“Whatever can be thought of has being, and its being is a precondition, not a result, of its being thought of. As regards the existence of an object of thought, however, nothing can be inferred from the fact of its being thought of, since it certainly does not exist in the thought which thinks it. Hence, finally, no special kind of being belongs to the objects of our presentations as such.”<sup>162</sup>

However new Russell’s discussion might have been in Britain, it undoubtedly had its predecessors on the Continent. As far as the acknowledgement of the mind-independent being of objects of judgement is concerned, Alexius Meinong and his theory of objects is definitely the most famous example. Meinong not only admitted the being of mind-independent entities (and, also, the subsistence of non-beings), but also presented, even before Russell, almost the same argument for them as Russell would later. In like fashion to Russell, Meinong criticised the only apparent exhaustiveness of the distinction between mind-independent, external and “ideal”, mental existence. He supposes the idealists’ considerations proceed in the following lines:

“[E]ither the Object to which cognition is directed exists in reality or it exists solely ‘in my idea’ (more briefly, it ‘pseudo-exists’). Perhaps nothing bears more eloquent testimony to the naturalness of this disjunction than the use of that word ‘ideal’. According to modern usage, without regard for its historical meaning, the word ‘ideal’ means the same as ‘thought of’ or ‘merely presented’; hence it pertains, apparently, to all of those objects which do not exist or which could not exist. What does not exist outside of us, so one automatically thinks, must at least exist in us.”<sup>163</sup>

Like Russell, Meinong is convinced that this train of thought is wrong-headed, since there is a being – subsistence (*Bestehen*) in Meinongian terminology – which even non-existent

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162 Ibid. By the “objects of our presentations”, Russell must have meant here the contents of our presentations.

163 Meinong, A. (1904). *Über Gegenstandstheorie. Untersuchungen zur Gegenstandstheorie und Psychologie*. Leipzig: Barth. Transl. as Meinong, A. (1960). *The Theory of Objects*. In: R. Chisholm, ed., *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*, Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, pp. 76-117.

objects possess.<sup>164</sup> Since Meinong's theory of objects preceded Russell's discussion in the *Principles*, we may presume that Meinongian consideration at this point exerted an essential influence on Russell's critique of Lotze's notion of being and existence.<sup>165</sup> Russell's claim about mind-independent being and existence does not end up here, though. There is yet another essential step taken by Russell – he proposes that those non-mental beings, to which truth or falsity may be ascribed, are to be called *propositions*. As early as the “Preface” to the *Principles*, he clearly states: “Holding, as I do, that what is true or false is not in general, mental, I require a name for the true or false as such, and this name can scarcely be other than propositions”.<sup>166</sup> And later in *Principles*, he adds that “[b]eing is that which belongs to every conceivable term, to every possible object of thought – in short to everything that can possibly occur in any proposition, true or false, and to all such propositions themselves. [...] Thus, being is a general attribute of everything, and to mention anything is to show that it is”.<sup>167</sup>

This account of propositions and their parts, terms, is not only radical, but also ungrounded if based solely upon Russell's criticism of Lotze and his introduction of mind-independent being. Indeed there is no argument present in the *Principles* which would secure Russell's contention that propositions and terms are non-mental beings. It is plausible, therefore, that Russell's position was based upon the concept of propositions Moore presented in his Dissertation and “The Nature of Judgement”. While Moore's account of propositions was, as I have noted, unsatisfactorily vague, Russell attempted in the *Principles of Mathematics* to fill in the gaps, particularly with regard to the issue of relations and the unity of the proposition. In what follows, I will attempt to explain his theory of relations and the way these relations are supposed to constitute the unity of a proposition.

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164 Meinong did not distinguish merely objects which exist and which are, but also objects as non-beings which subsist, see: Meinong, 1904, p. 86. Objects themselves, Meinong claims, do not have intrinsically either being or non-being. As themselves, they are “outside the being”, *ausserseind*, or, in other words, their *Sosein*, i.e. their characteristics, are independent on whether they are or not (Ibid). This theory is summarized in what Meinong calls the “principle of the indifference of pure Objects to being” (*der Satz vom Aussersein des reinen Gegenstandes*).

165 Russell devoted three articles to Meinong's philosophy: Russell, B. (1904a). Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (I.), *Mind*, 13(50), pp. 204-219; (1904b). Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (II.), *Mind*, 13(51), pp. 336-354 and (1904c). Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (III.), 13(52), pp. 509-524.

166 Russell, 1903, Preface, xlvii.

167 Ibid., §427, p. 455, emphasis in the original.

## 3.2 Relations and Unities

### 3.2.1 Russell, Meinong and Ehrenfels: Complexes and Their Unity

Moore's account of a proposition amounts merely to the claim that a proposition "is constituted by any number of concepts, together with a specific relation between them".<sup>168</sup> However, a proposition is to be something true or false, and plainly not every combination of concepts is true or false; so we are led to ask how it is guaranteed that a proposition, constituted by any number of further unspecified concepts and some relation, amounts to a meaningful unity.

It is Russell, reacting to Moore's account, who famously brought the problem of the unity of the proposition to the fore. He claims in the *Principles of Mathematics* that a proposition is "essentially a unity"<sup>169</sup> and proposes that this unity is "embodied" in the verb which makes the proposition into a unity by unifying its remaining terms.<sup>170</sup> It is precisely the issue of the unity of the proposition guaranteed by the relation occurring in it that will present a difficulty for the account of propositions in the *Principles*. The core of this problem, as I will describe in more detail below, resides in Russell's struggle to explain that and how a relation is capable of relating or unifying a proposition, given that it is itself a self-standing element of the proposition and that it loses its relating nature upon analysis.

The issue of the "twofold nature of relations"<sup>171</sup>, i.e. their possibility of appearing as relating and non-relating elements within a proposition is a philosophical evergreen in Russell-studies. Even though it is acknowledged to be an essential issue in Russell's theory of propositions, it seems to me that there has not been enough discussion of *why* Russell conceived of relations in this "twofold" way, i.e. as both relating and non-relating. I would like to present this issue here in the context which seems to me favourable for understanding Russell's contention. Thus, before embarking on an investigation of Russell's concept of relations, I would like to introduce those theories contemporary to Russell which claimed that relations always function in the complexes as relational, namely those from Christian von Ehrenfels and

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168 Baldwin and Preti, 2011, p. 166.

169 Russell, 1903, §54, p. 51.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid., §48, 46; §53, p. 50.

Alexius Meinong.

The Austrian philosopher Christian von Ehrenfels is famous for his introduction of the notion of *Gestalt Qualities* (*Gestaltqualitäten*) whose subsequent elaboration in the work of other psychologists (Koffka, Köhler, Wertheimer et al.) led to the birth of the *Gestalt* theory in psychology.<sup>172</sup> In psychology, Ehrenfels' notion of a Gestalt quality is essential due to its emphasis, running counter to the atomistic strand elaborated by Wilhelm Wundt and others, that in perception, we perceive not the independent elements, but the structured whole of the perceptive field.<sup>173</sup> The Berlin school of psychology later conducted several psychological experiments to prove this claim, and formulated many laws purporting to show that a perceptual field is organized as a unified, yet structured, whole.<sup>174</sup> While generally known as a theory of perception, Gestalt theorists attempted to prove that the organization of elements into the wholes also plays an essential role in learning, thinking, remembering and other higher cognitive processes.<sup>175</sup> Here, I wish to present Ehrenfels' theory of Gestalt qualities as an alternative to Russell's treatment of relations as having a curious twofold nature.

Ehrenfels was clearly aware that the unification problem, since it concerns the way in which our perception of the world can issue in judgements, presented an essential issue for all theories of cognition and perception influenced by Kant's transcendental-idealistic epistemology.<sup>176</sup> When we see a figure (a spatial complex) or hear a melody (an aural complex), a Kantian would claim that the unity of the final impression does not ensue merely from the outside, but that, on the contrary, we need to activate our synthesizing capacity and integrate the initial sensations into the meaningful perceivable whole. Thus, Kantianism is well aware of the fact that in order to be in possession of a meaningful perception, we cannot do merely with many singular atomic sensations, as several early psychologists used to think. In the emphasis

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172 There is also a Gestalt therapy in psychology; those two, however, do not coincide.

173 See e.g. Freedheim, D. K. and Weiner, I. B., eds. (2003). *Handbook of Psychology: Volume I, History of Psychology*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, p. 100. However, we should be careful not to overemphasize the atomistic interpretation of Wundt's approach which has been rather adopted by his follower E. B. Titchener who interpreted Wundt's theoretical stance in a simplified way (Ibid.).

174 See e.g. Koffka, K. (1936). *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*. London: Kegan Paul; Kusch, M. (1995). *Psychologism – A Case Study in the Sociology of Philosophical Knowledge*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 262-263.

175 Koffka, 1936, especially chapters 8-14, pp. 306-679.

176 For Kant, the theories of perception and judgment are inseparably connected, since our experience is for Kant always judgmental in a sense that categories have been always already applied to sensibly given (before we may consciously experience anything). In his paper from 1890, Ehrenfels focuses exclusively on perception and does not tackle the issues concerning the nature of judgment. In this, he differs from Meinong who distinguishes referents of perception – objects – and referents of judgments – objectives.

laid on the necessity of the unification in our perception, Ehrenfels might be understood to be in agreement with Kant. But, importantly, he explains the unification not by means of the activity of our cognitive faculties, but with the aid of so called “Gestalt qualities” which are present in objects as we perceive them “without any activity of mind specifically directed towards them”.<sup>177</sup>

As Ehrenfels himself emphasizes, the notion of the perceptual *Gestalt* was not original with him.<sup>178</sup> Austrian physicist and philosopher Ernst Mach was probably the first to offer a systematic elaboration of the idea that when we have spatial or visual perceptions, we do not merely see or hear individual elements (elementary sensations or single tones), but perceive the object or melody as a whole – and for this, something has to be added.<sup>179</sup> This addition, Mach postulated, is realized by a further element which ensures that our perception is unified and which is also directly perceived. Thus, in the case of visual perception, when we see an object, we see its colour and texture, but we also perceive the element which makes this object into a unity, namely into a spatial figure with several characteristics (shape, colour, texture etc.).

In a similar vein, Mach analyses our aural perception of melody when he introduces, to describe the additional unifying element, his famous notion of *Ton-Gestalt*.<sup>180</sup> When we hear a melody, we do not merely hear each tone in turn, but hear the melody as a whole – a result, according to Mach, of the additional element of *Ton-Gestalt*. Mach’s approach is peculiar, since despite pointing out that perception needs to be unified and non-atomistic, he insists that the unifying Gestalt (in both visual and aural perception) is just another perceived element alongside others.<sup>181</sup> It seems obvious, then, that he could have been exposed to the very same objection Russell would be exposed several years later – how is it possible that the supposedly unifying element really provides a perceived object with the unity if it is on a par with their other non-unifying elements (e.g. particular visually perceived data or heard tones)?

Ehrenfels suggests, correctly to my mind, that Mach’s main intention in introducing the additional element in perception was basically anti-Kantian – Mach wished to show that the

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177 Ehrenfels, Ch. von. (1890). Über “Gestaltqualitäten”. *Vierteljahrsschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, 14, pp. 249-292, transl. as Ehrenfels (1988). On “Gestalt Qualities” in: M. Smith, ed., *Foundations of Gestalt Theory*. Munich, and Vienna: Philosophia, pp. 82-117, p. 112.

178 Ibid., p. 82.

179 Mach, E. (1886). *Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen*. Jena: Verlag von Gustav Fischer, pp. 135-136.

180 Ibid., p. 232.

181 Ehrenfels 1890, p. 83.

unity of perceived wholes is not established by the mind, but is already “there”, in the objects as perceived, without our synthesizing or integrating activity.<sup>182</sup> However, we need to turn to Ehrenfels for a more promising account of the unity of complex object as perceived by us.

Ehrenfels, like Mach, was deeply interested in music and its psychological investigation and he also chose for his analysis an example which has gradually become paradigmatic amongst psychologists, i.e. that of hearing a melody. Melody is, metaphorically speaking, something over and above the sum of all particular notes from which it is composed. Like Mach, Ehrenfels points out that to experience hearing a melody is not to perceive only the particular tones in succession, but perceive a melody as a complex whole.<sup>183</sup> Again like Mach, Ehrenfels observes that the same holds, probably even more straightforwardly, in the realm of visual perception. There, our final perceived whole is not a collection of elementary visual data, but a single unified and structured whole which we perceive in our visual field. The perception of figures serves as a good example, since seeing a figure in the visual field, like hearing a melody, is something more than the individual perceptual data from which our final perceived whole is created – we may have singular perceptions of colours, textures, shapes etc. in our visual field, but these particular elements in themselves do not constitute a particular spatial figure. So far, Ehrenfels’ discussion parallels Mach’s.

It is in the account of the unity within the objects as perceived in which the two thinkers differ considerably. Mach supposes that perceiving the unity of the melody or the shape merely requires us to perceive an additional element to those perceived otherwise. By contrast, Ehrenfels explains the unity of perceptual whole by appeal to his notion of *Gestalt quality*. True, this Gestalt-quality is for him, as Ton-Gestalt was for Mach, “a new positive element of presentation” or “a positive content of presentation”.<sup>184</sup> It is, however, not merely added to other elements, but *founded on* them, while correspondingly these elements provide a basis or foundation for the newly arising Gestalt quality. It is thus not something which may be conceived of as only lying side by side with other elements of the perceptual whole.

As in the case of Mach, Ehrenfels’ account of Gestalt qualities is anti-idealistic – he

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182 Ibid.

183 Ibid, pp. 84-86, pp. 90-93.

184 “By a *Gestalt quality* we understand a positive content of presentation bound up in consciousness with the presence of complexes of mutually separable (i.e. independently presentable) elements. That complex of presentations which is necessary for the existence of a given Gestalt quality we call the *foundation* [*Grundlage*] of that quality” (Ibid., p. 93, emphasis in the original).

points out that Gestalt-qualities are not created by the mind – they are instead given as further elements within the perceived content of presentation and without any special activity of our mind.<sup>185</sup> Thus, when we perceive (visually, auditorily or in other way<sup>186</sup>), the perceived object is composed of various elements of which at least some serve as the foundations for the qualities which unify (some of) the perceived elements into the (visual, tactual etc.) whole. Ehrenfels expressly admits that not all elements need to provide a foundation for some Gestalt qualities based on them. However, he presupposes that where the Gestalt-quality is present, some objects perform this founding role.<sup>187</sup> Thus, for Ehrenfels, there are no *non-relating* Gestalt qualities – such as a Gestalt quality of a shape which actually does not form the shape of some object or a melody which in fact does not unify particular tones into a single whole.<sup>188</sup> There may be elements not related by any Gestalt quality, but if there is this quality, it always relates the elements upon which it is founded. This will imply, as we will see, an essential difference from Russell’s account of relations.

Before comparing Ehrenfels’ account with Russell’s, let’s turn our attention for a while to another important figure in the German-speaking milieu who has contributed a great deal to the discussion concerning the issue of complexes and their unities, namely the above-mentioned Austrian philosopher Alexius Meinong. Meinong, the teacher of Ehrenfels in Prague, is known in philosophy primarily for his extravagant ontology of non-existent objects.<sup>189</sup> However, we can also find in his writings the considerations related directly to our issue of objects’ elements, their relations and unities. Those are to be found especially in his early article “Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung und deren Verhältnis zur inneren Wahrnehmung” (“On Objects of Higher Order and their Relation to Inner Perception”) from 1899.<sup>190</sup> His main concern here,

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185 “[W]e can conclude that Gestalt qualities are given in consciousness simultaneously with their foundations, without any activity of mind specifically directed towards them” (Ibid., p. 112).

186 Ehrenfels’ analysis includes much more than the examples of the simplest temporal and visual Gestalt qualities of melody and shape. He discusses temporal-visual qualities, tactual qualities, Gestalt qualities present in the sensations of motion, in colour harmonies and disharmonies or in the perception consisting from the fusion of touch, temperature, taste and smell sensations, Gestalt qualities of higher order (those built upon other Gestalt qualities) and Gestalt qualities present in the art and human actions. It is not of an importance for me to go into detail here. This list however shows how extensive the field where Gestalt qualities are to be found actually is. (See Ibid., p. 93ff.)

187 Ibid., p. 92.

188 Ehrenfels does not equate Gestalt qualities with relations, but it is obvious from his account they are very similar to them: he contends that relations within a perceived complex are determined by or founded in Gestalt qualities, see Ibid.

189 In this, Meinong differs considerably from Ehrenfels who does not provide any ontology of objects, but is merely interested in how we perceive various objects.

190 Meinong, A. (1899). Über Gegenstände höherer Ordnung und deren Verhältnis zur inneren Wahrnehmung. *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane*, 21, pp. 182-272. Trans. as: Meinong, A. (1978). On Objects of Higher Order and Their Relationship to Internal Perception. In: M.-L. Schubert



indicated by the title, is with *objects of higher order* (*Gegenstände höherer Ordnung*) which are the objects based on simpler elements. According to Meinong, objects of higher order, among which relations belong, are characterized by a specific dependence and reliance on the objects of lower order on which they are founded.<sup>191</sup> Or, in other words, objects of higher order are based on objects of lower order as on their necessary presuppositions (*Vorraussetzungen*).<sup>192</sup>

The objects of higher order might be called *superiora*, while the objects of lower order are *inferiora*. Relations (as objects of higher order) are based on their *relata* (elements related by the relation as the objects of lower order) and complexes (objects of higher order which consist of several things) rely on the particular things included in them (objects of lower order). All relations have the status of *relating relations*, i.e. they are binding elements which “knit” the complexes together.<sup>193</sup> “Any complex is composed of its component parts in virtue of a relation *r* in which they stand to each other”.<sup>194</sup> A relation in the complex is not a further additional element, but that by virtue of which other elements are put together as organized constituents of the complex. The elements belong to the complex just by means of their mutual relatedness provided by the relation. Thus, once there is a relation, its elements may be given as the constituents of the complex. Eventually, a relation cannot be, for Meinong, actually considered apart from a complex, since once the relation relates its elements, we have the complex constituted by those related elements.<sup>195</sup> Relations thus become the complexes as viewed from the point of related members of these complexes.<sup>196</sup> A relation is dependent upon its *relata*, and the complex is dependent, in turn, upon the presence of the relation.<sup>197</sup>

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Kalsi, ed., *Alexius Meinong on Objects of Higher Order and Husserl's Phenomenology*, The Hague, Boston, London: Martinus Nijhoff.

191 Apart from relations, Meinong recognizes also other types of objects of higher order which he calls “complexions”. Among these, there are, for instance, groups consisting of several elements (e.g. “four nuts”), melodies and spatial figures composed of colour, shape and other characteristics (see Ibid., p. 145).

192 Ibid., p. 144. Meinong claims that the primacy in inventing the name and description of the objects of higher order is probably due to B. Fechner in his *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, see Fechner, G. T. (1876). *Vorschule der Ästhetik, Erster Teil*. Leipzig: Druck und Verlag von Breitkopf and Härtel.

193 Meinong, 1899, p. 146.

194 Ibid., p. 146.

195 Meinong formulates this from the subjective side, i.e. from our having ideas about relations and complexes: “If we are about to have ideas *a* and *b* as standing in the relation *r* we can only do it by having idea of them in a complexion” (Ibid., p. 146). However, from the overall discussion surrounding this quotation, it is obvious that he would be willing to extend this assertion also to the objective side, i.e. to complexes and relations themselves. See e.g. immediately following: “The principle ‘where there is a complexion there is a relation and vice versa’ is a natural result holding for real things and those which are merely thought” (Ibid.).

196 Ibid., p. 147.

197 Meinong calls this relation of dependency and partial identity (of a relation and complex) a “partial coincidence”.



Thus, for instance, in the complex of “four nuts” we do not simply have four elements (nuts) next to each other. But, we may add, we also do not have those elements *and* their relation simply put side by side. What we have from our subjective side is the collating (*kolligierend*) activity in which we put the complex together.<sup>198</sup> And also, on the objective side, we have four nuts related by a relation into a unity.<sup>199</sup> Similarly, a melody is not, as it also wasn’t for Ehrenfels, only “an objective collective of notes”, but a particular complex of mutually interconnected notes.<sup>200</sup> Or in the case of any figure (considered as a connection of colour and shape), we do not simply have a shape *and* a colour, but we have “a certain togetherness or connectedness of colour and shape”.<sup>201</sup>

Thus, both Meinong and Ehrenfels insisted, to use Russell’s vocabulary, that there are only relating relations. If there is a relation added to the terms of a complex, it always relates these terms. Russell, by contrast, argues that a relation is endowed with a mysterious “twofold” nature based on which it can occur both as relating and as non-relating. It is the aim of the subsequent section to investigate his reasons for insisting on this theory, and the consequences it had.

### 3.2.2 The Mystery of Relating and Non-Relating Relation

In the previous section, I introduced Ehrenfels’ and Meinong’s ideas concerning simple elements, their mutual relations and their eventual unity. The question yet to be tackled is whether we can consider those accounts suitable for comparison with Russell’s account of propositions and relations, since, while Russell analyses the notion of a proposition, Ehrenfels focused upon our perception of complex objects and Meinong primarily on the judgments about complex objects. Despite this difference, I believe that the intended comparison is apt, since Russell took over the notion of a proposition from Moore who did not assume a clear separation between propositions and complex (worldly) objects.<sup>202</sup>

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198 This notion of a “collating activity in which we put the complex together” still resembles idealistic accounts in that it is us who unify the elements of the perceived complexes. Later in his work, Meinong abandoned this notion, emphasizing the complexity in the objects. For more details see Lindenfeld, D. F. (1981). *The Transformation of Positivism: Alexius Meinong and European Thought, 1880-1920*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, p. 115ff.

199 Ibid., p. 145.

200 Ibid.

201 Ibid. In the case of melody, Meinong explicitly mentions Ehrenfels as a proponent of the similar theory (Ibid.); see also Ehrenfels, 1890, pp. 94-97.

202 Since Russell, under the influence of Moore, insisted that a proposition as a referent of a judgment may be investigated without reference to our relation to it, he is philosophically closer to Meinong who, in contrast to

As I also pointed out, Moore sidestepped the main problem his new theory of propositions brought to light: the issue of the composition of a proposition. He simply never offered any detailed account of the way a proposition is composed from its constituents. This task was awaiting Russell, who acknowledged the problem as a critical issue to be accounted for within the theory of propositions and set up to elucidate how the unity of a proposition is constituted.

Russell began to discuss propositions and their constituents in the fourth chapter of his *Principles of Mathematics* titled “Proper Names, Adjectives and Verbs”.<sup>203</sup> From the title of the chapter we can immediately deduce that the elements from which propositions are composed will be at least equally important as propositions themselves, considering that there is in the first instance no remarks about propositions, but only about the names of their constituents. Proper names, adjectives and verbs are however only the guidelines to those constituents – they are the names of linguistic categories while we are interested in what they refer to.<sup>204</sup>

Grammatical considerations proper are in the end almost entirely absent, since Russell immediately turns his attention to the referents of words: the substantives “humanity” or “sequence”, for instance, are not proper substantives (proper names) because they are *logically* derived, respectively, from the adjective “human” and the predicate “follow”.<sup>205</sup> All notions which may function as adjectives or predicates are labelled as adjectives and predicates, even though we may also encounter them in a form “in which grammar would call them substantives” (e.g. a predicate “love” may acquire a substantivized form “loving”).<sup>206</sup> Thus Russell is not finally interested in grammatical, but in ontological distinctions between the entities which are in language represented by substantives, adjectives and verbs.

An essential step Russell then takes is to introduce the all-embracing notion of a “term” under which everything represented by substantives, adjectives and verbs fall. “Term” is, in Russell’s words, “the widest word in the philosophical vocabulary”.<sup>207</sup> A term is anything that

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Ehrenfels, attempted to provide not only the description of our judgments and objects as judged by us, but also the ontology of objects.

203 Russell, 1903, §§46-55, pp. 43-53.

204 Ibid., §46, p. 43.

205 “Proper names” are for Russell those substantives which may function in propositions merely as logical subjects about which propositions are. Proper names are thus *not* those which may also function as adjectives or verbs within proposition, i.e. a substantive “humanity” or “sequence” which are, according to Russell, logically derived from the adjective “human” and verb “follow” respectively (see Russell, 1903, §46, pp. 43, 44).

206 Ibid., §46, p. 44.

207 Ibid., §47, p. 44.

can be thought of, that can be counted as one and which has being. Most importantly, terms include anything which can occur in a true or false proposition; synonymous to the “term” are words “unit”, “individual” and “entity”.<sup>208</sup> We may wonder why Russell decided to introduce such a general notion at all and the answer may be found in the context in which it is treated, namely in Russell’s discussing “familiar” distinctions made in philosophy: “the distinctions of subject and predicate, substance and attribute, substantive and adjective [...]”.<sup>209</sup> Thus, the notion of a term is supposed to present a critical contribution to a long-lasting philosophical tradition which treated judgements as divided into a subject and predicate, which corresponded to an ontological distinction between a substance and attribute. It was generally presupposed that while a substance is a self-standing entity, an attribute may exist only by being “in” some substance: a predicate is always predicated about subject; and a subject is always that about which something is predicated.<sup>210</sup>

As opposed to this ontology and theory of judgement, Russell introduced his notion of a “term” which does not make the distinction between a self-standing substance and accidents dependent on it, but which asserts that *anything* which may be thought of and counted as one is a “term”. Among “terms”, there are both individual and abstract entities, classes, relations and even non-existing objects: “A man, a moment, a number, a class, a relation, a chimaera, or anything else that can be mentioned, is sure to be a term; and to deny that such and such a thing is a term must always be false”.<sup>211</sup> Everything which is a term is in possession of properties which were previously assigned merely to substances (ontologically speaking) or subjects (of judgements): within a judgement or a proposition, every term may function as a logical subject.<sup>212</sup> Similarly to substances, “every term is immutable and indestructible”<sup>213</sup>, “substantial”, “self-subsistent” and “self-identical”.<sup>214</sup>

Thus, we may summarize, it is only a superstition to suppose that only terms referred to by substantives are self-subsistent – by self-subsistence, Russell seems to mean that things *are*

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208 Ibid.

209 Ibid.

210 For a summary of the treatment of substances and attributes in Western philosophical tradition see Grossmann, R. (1992). *The Existence of the World: An Introduction to Ontology*. London and New York: Routledge.

211 Russell, 1903, §47, p. 45.

212 Ibid.

213 Ibid.

214 “Thus the theory that there are adjectives or attributes or ideal things, or whatever they may be called, which are in some way less substantial, less self-subsistent, less self-identical, than true substantives, appears to be wholly erroneous, and to be easily reduced to a contradiction” (Ibid., §49, p. 47).

without being dependent on something other than themselves. Terms indicated by adjectives or verbs, which were supposed to be necessarily inherent in the substances which they reputedly characterized, enjoy the same level of self-subsistence: thus neither relations nor predicates exist merely as accidents of substances. This shared self-subsistence of all terms may be, however, considered the first step towards Russell's (in)famous difficulties with the question of how terms are put together to create a complex or, in other words, a proposition. For we may ask: If all terms are independent of each other, how does it come that they may be put together and form a unity? The formation of unity out of terms is for Russell however essential since a proposition amounts in the *Principles* exactly to the complex unity consisting of several terms.

In the *Principles*, Russell claims that relations are able to unify terms into propositions. Among the terms, he claims, we may distinguish between *things* and *concepts*. Concepts are further divided into *predicates* indicated by adjectives (e.g. “human”) and *relations* indicated by verbs (e.g. “to love”).<sup>215</sup> Eventually, however, Russell prefers to refer to both of them as “relations” since predicates may be understood as particular types of relations.<sup>216</sup> The crucial difference between things and relations rests in that while things may only function as terms about which a proposition is (they may be merely logical subjects in a proposition), relations are endowed with “a curious twofold nature” due to which they may occur both as logical subjects and as that which relates other terms within a proposition.<sup>217</sup>

Thus, Caesar is a thing since he may occur within a proposition merely as something about which something is predicated or which is related to other terms by means of a relation; never as something which itself predicates or relates other terms. Relations, on the other hand, may occur in two ways in a proposition: firstly, without a relating capacity, in which case a verb, which indicates the relation, occurs in the form of a verbal noun or present participle.<sup>218</sup> (Thus, for instance, in the proposition “Killing is wrong”, “killing” is a verbal noun and the relation of killing does not unify the remaining terms of a proposition into a unity: this is done

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215 Ibid., §48, p. 45.

216 Initially, Russell defines predicates as “concepts, other than verbs, which occur in propositions having only one term or subject” (Ibid., §48, p. 46). In “Socrates is human”, “is” amounts to the verb and “human” to predicate (Ibid.). However, in §53 (p. 50), Russell adds that subject-predicate propositions may be “perhaps” considered as relational propositions, since the relation between subject and adjective (e.g. between “Socrates” and “human” in “Socrates is human” “is certainly implied” (Ibid.). We may thus describe them also as relational propositions in which an assertion does not concern (at least) two terms, but only one (Ibid.). As the word “perhaps” suggests, Russell wasn’t completely persuaded at this point. But further on in the *Principles*, he refers merely to “relations” nevertheless.

217 Ibid., §48, p. 46; §53, p. 50.

218 Ibid., §52, p. 49.

here by another relation, indicated by the verb “is”. And secondly, the *same* relation may acquire a relational function. (It is the case, for instance, in the proposition “Roman senators killed Caesar”, where the relation of killing unifies a proposition which consists of the terms Roman senators, killing itself and Caesar.) To summarize, the twofold nature of relation amounts to the distinction between its use as a *non-relating* and as a *relating* relation or, in other words, between the *relation in itself* (non-relating) and the relation *actually relating*.<sup>219</sup>

The official argument that Russell provides to justify his claim that relation must be able to perform both relating and non-relating role within a proposition draws on his critique of Frege’s conception of concepts. Since Frege insisted that concepts are always relational in nature (they are unsaturated, in need of completion), he was led to his “concept *horse* paradox” - it is impossible to make a meaningful claim that “the concept of being a horse is a concept”, since I cannot put the concept into a subject-position in the sentence and retaining its predicative nature.<sup>220</sup> To this, Russell objects that we *have to* be in a position to assert something about a relation (in his case, or about a “concept” in Frege’s case) and to do this, we must be able to put it into a subject position. Used in this way, however, it does not have a relational function.

It may seem that the fact that a verb must be capable of staying in the subject position (in which instance a relation is non-relational) does not in itself endanger a propositional unity: when a verb is in the subject position and relation is non-relational, there is another relation which binds the proposition together. Thus, for instance, in “Killing is wrong”, the relation of killing does not relate the remaining terms of the proposition but is rather itself related to them by the relation indicated by “is”. But we may ask: if any relation can function as non-relational within a proposition, what will guarantee that there remains *any* relational relation in a proposition? It seems to me that Russell’s worries concerning the “disappearance” of relations in their relating function is, at least partially, due to the above presented, general notion of a “term” under which all things, concepts and relations fall.<sup>221</sup> Russell’s emphasis on the equal self-subsistence of all terms seems to imply that any relation may be considered apart from the

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219 Ibid., §54, p. 50. Russell also called relating relation as an “actual verb” (Ibid.).

220 Frege, G. (1892). Über Begriff und Gegenstand. *Vierteljahresschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*, 16, pp. 192-205. trans. as Frege, G. (1997). On Concept and Object. In: M. Beaney, ed., *The Frege Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 181-193; p. 185.

221 For a similar interpretation see also Leonard Linsky who claims that it is just the all-encompassing notion of a “term” which lies at the bottom of Russell’s struggles with the unity of the proposition: “Russell’s idea of the single, all inclusive, ontological category of terms makes the problem [of the unity of proposition] both inevitable and intractable for him” (Linsky, L. (1992). The Unity of the Proposition. *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 30(2), pp. 243-273, p. 262).

terms it relates, and that “in itself” it is thus non-relational. And, apart from that, there is yet another issue which may illuminate Russell’s concern about relations: from Russell’s exposition, it appears that the problem of propositional unity arises when the non-relational use of relation ensues from proposition’s analysis:

“The twofold nature of the verb, as actual verb and as verbal noun, may be expressed, if all verbs are held to be relations, as the difference between a relation in itself and a relation actually relating. Consider, for example, the proposition “*A differs from B*”. The constituents of this proposition, *if we analyse it*, appear to be only *A*, difference, *B*. Yet these constituents, thus placed side by side, do not reconstitute the proposition. The difference which occurs in the proposition actually relates *A* and *B*, whereas *the difference after analysis is a notion which has no connection with A and B*. [...] A proposition, in fact, is essentially a unity, and *when analysis has destroyed the unity*, no enumeration of constituents will restore the proposition. The verb, when used as a verb, embodies the unity of the proposition, and is thus distinguishable from the verb considered as a term, though I do not know how to give a clear account of the precise nature of the distinction.”<sup>222</sup>

The supposed loss of the relational nature of a relation after analysis persuaded Russell that analysis is at least a partial falsification since it destroys the initial unity of the proposition.<sup>223</sup> It is mysterious why he adopted such a view, though. I consider it probable that he was influenced by the notion of analysis offered by his older, highly respected colleague F. H. Bradley. Bradley, as a monist, claimed that every analysis amounts to a falsification because there is, in fact, only one all-embracing entity which cannot be further analysed.<sup>224</sup>

According to Bradley, when we judge, the true subject of our judgement is not the grammatical subject of the judgement (e.g. “Tom” in “Tom runs”), but the whole reality from which we, so to say, inserted into a judgement only some arbitrary parts or aspects (here Tom and the act of running). This reality, “the real”, is the whole which we encounter not in judgements, but in feelings or perception.<sup>225</sup> Judgement is thus *not* to be conceived of as a synthesis of ideas (e.g. the ideas of “Tom” and of “running”), but as the reference of these ideas – the “ideal content” of judgement – to reality.<sup>226</sup>

In making judgements, we always analyse reality and distinguish arbitrary parts which

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222 Ibid. §54, p. 51; emphases mine.

223 Ibid.

224 “It is wholly unjustifiable to take up a complex, to do any work we please upon it by analysis, and then simply predicate as an adjective of the given these results of our abstraction. These products were never there as such, and in saying, as we do, that as such they are there, we falsify the fact” (Bradley, F. H. (1883). *The Principles of Logic*, 2 Volumes. London: Kegan Paul., B. I, Ch. II, §64, p. 94).

225 Ibid., §4, p. 45.

226 “Judgment is not the synthesis of ideas, but the reference of ideal content to reality” (Ibid., §15, p. 56).



do not exist on their own.<sup>227</sup> What really exists is merely the reality as a whole. Thus, judgement as an analysis and distinguishing enterprise is always a distortion of reality. By making these arbitrary selections by means of our judgements, “we have mutilated the given”.<sup>228</sup> However, if every judgement is merely an arbitrary assemblage of in themselves non-existing, arbitrarily chosen parts of the real, “how can it any longer lay claim to truth?”, Bradley asks.<sup>229</sup> And this is, obviously, from his part merely a rhetorical question: it cannot. Every judgement is irrevocably false not because it goes beyond the facts and claims something which is not true about them, but because it comes short of them, i.e. does not describe the reality as a whole (but merely its arbitrary parts).<sup>230</sup> “A fraction of the truth, here as often elsewhere, becomes entire falsehood, because it is used to qualify the whole”, Bradley concludes.<sup>231</sup>

Russell is of course far from embracing this absolute-idealistic view, but he nevertheless insists on analysis really being – even if only partially – a falsification, since after the analysis is carried out an initially relating relation loses its relational power and ends up as a non-relating element.<sup>232</sup> In other words, the unity of a proposition is lost on analysis – “the constituents of the initial proposition are only placed side by side and do not reconstitute the initial proposition”<sup>233</sup>; “a proposition, in fact, is essentially a unity, and when analysis has destroyed the unity, no enumeration of constituents will restore the proposition”.<sup>234</sup> This conclusion, i.e.

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227 Ibid., §62, p. 93.

228 Ibid. “It is a very common and most ruinous superstition to suppose”, Bradley asserts, “that analysis is no alteration, and that, whenever we distinguish, we have at once to do with divisible existence. It is an immense assumption to conclude, when a fact comes to us as a whole, that some parts of it may exist without any sort of regard for the rest” (Ibid., §64, p. 93).

229 Ibid., §62, p. 93.

230 Ibid., §61, p. 92.

231 Ibid., p. 180. Bradley’s famous analysis of relations, which postulated the existence of an infinite regress in an attempt on their definition, is an application of this general idea of analysis as falsification. We suppose there are relations and units, which are related by them. However, for Bradley both units and relations are merely non-existent parts of the real. “They are fictions of the mind, mere distinctions within a single reality, which a common delusion erroneously takes for independent facts” (Ibid., p. 79). He explicitly mentions Russell as maintaining the opposing view: “Relations exist only in and through a whole which cannot in the end be resolved into relations and terms. ‘And’, ‘together’ and ‘between’, are all in the end senseless apart from such a whole. The opposite view is maintained (as I understand) by Mr. Russell [...]” (Ibid.).

232 As he describes his position in the article “Some Explanations in Reply to Mr. Bradley”, “I do not admit that in any strict sense unities are incapable of analysis; on the contrary, I hold that they are the only objects that can be analysed. What I admit is that no *enumeration* of their constituents will reconstitute them since any such enumeration gives a plurality, not a unity”; in: Russell, B. (1910b). *Some Explanations in Reply to Mr. Bradley. Mind*, 19(75), pp. 373-378, p. 373; emphasis in the original.

233 Russell, 1903, §54, p. 50.

234 Ibid., §54, p. 51. We could potentially mention the positions which the constituents should occupy, but even then, Russell insists, we will end up with a – even if longer – list of constituents, e.g. *A*, referent, love, *B*, relatum; see Ibid. In his article on Meinong, Russell describes the “special and apparently indefinable kind of unity” and claims that the inadequacy of analysis resides in that “propositions are true or false, while their constituents, in general, are neither” (Russell, 1904a, p. 210). For a similar view, see also Russell, 1904b, pp. 348, 350. It is also interesting that similar claim that the unity of a proposition is taken away by the analysis is present

that analysis at least partially equates to falsification<sup>235</sup> is never really argued for in the *Principles*, but simply presupposed. This is probably because Russell, whether he acknowledged it or not, was influenced by Bradley on this point. However, the fact that analysis provides us with such an unsatisfactory result – with merely non-relating relation – was surely hardly acceptable and only sadly acknowledged by Russell in the *Principles*. The non-relational nature of relation, which manifested itself already in the inclusion of relations under the general notion of a “term” and was finally decided upon with the loss of relational nature of relation after analysis, may be thus considered to be the first pressing issue Russell encountered with the *Principles*’ notion of a proposition.

A second closely related difficulty within the philosophical framework presented in the *Principles* is that of false propositions. For Russell, a proposition is a *unified* complex of terms. However, there need to be both true and false propositions since we obviously can judge falsely.<sup>236</sup> But a unified complex of terms seems to amount to a true proposition, i.e. to a state of affairs which appears in the world. What does a false proposition then amount to? It cannot be a mere aggregate of elements, precisely because it is a proposition, i.e. a *unified* complex of terms. Thus, a false proposition needs to be something which is *unified and false at the same time*. Many commentators, including Russell himself, pointed out how unintuitive or even contradictory such a notion of a false proposition is.<sup>237</sup>

The problem concerning false propositions is not tackled in the *Principles*, but appears in “The Nature of Truth”, an article published in 1905, only two years after the composition of the *Principles*.<sup>238</sup> In this article, there remains the *Principles*’ notion of a proposition: propositions are mind-independent, complex entities.<sup>239</sup> Their independence of our act of judgement is emphasized by the claim that even if we are concerned with the propositions in their relation to judgement, it is potentially misleading to describe them primarily as the objects

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already in Russell’s earlier *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, only he uses there the term of a “judgement”, not yet a “proposition”: “[...] the constituents [of a judgement] have a certain kind of unity – the kind always involved in enumeration, or in assertions of a whole – which is taken away by analysis” (Russell, 1900, §11, p. 26).

235 Russell, 1903, §439, p. 473.

236 See e.g. Russell, B. (1905). The Nature of Truth. In: A. Urquhart, ed. (1994). *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell, Volume 4: Foundations of Logic 1903-1905*, London: Routledge, pp. 492-506, p. 503.

237 According to Linsky (1992, p. 254), for instance, we would need to, in order to account for false propositions, destroy the unity of propositions – which is just another way to assert that unity and falsity of a proposition are incompatible.

238 Russell, B. (1905). The Nature of Truth. In: Urquhart, 1994.

239 Ibid., p. 503.



of judgement.<sup>240</sup> True, they may be judged, but they are in their nature wholly independent of being the objects of our mental acts. It would be more accurate to describe them as complex entities whose complexity is fully independent of our ability to judge them.<sup>241</sup> We by no means create this complexity; rather it is already “there” in the propositions and we apprehend it in our acts of judgement.

Propositions are thus here still identified with complexes and the peculiarity of complexes depicted in the *Principles* is, again, accepted, rather than elucidated: propositions are specific unities whose particularity resides in their unity being realized by means of the relation. But, Russell bravely admits that he is not sure “how to describe this kind of complexity”.<sup>242</sup> And the perplexing nature of false propositions is emphasized here as well. False propositions are peculiar entities since they should represent complexes which are both unified (since every proposition is supposed to be a unity) and false.

But the existence of false propositions, however curious they may seem, has according to Russell to be admitted, since we can also judge falsely. Like true judgement, Russell claims, false judgement stands in need of some object: “Since false propositions can be judged as well as true ones, they too are entities”.<sup>243</sup> Here Russell, similarly to Twardowski and others, presupposes that even false judgements need to be in possession of some object to which they refer.<sup>244</sup> The reason behind it is that for Russell judging about something that has no being would amount to not judging at all.<sup>245</sup>

Moreover, there is yet another serious difficulty surrounding false propositions, namely that if both true and false propositions amount to unified complexes in the world, we seem to be unable to spell out the difference between truth and falsity. As Russell famously formulates

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240 Ibid.

241 Ibid.

242 Ibid.

243 Ibid.

244 For Twardowski, see Betti, A. (2013). We Owe It To Sigwart! A New Look at the Content/Object Distinction in Early Phenomenological Theories of Judgment from Brentano to Twardowski. In: Textor, 2013, pp. 74-96, pp. 76-79. For Russell see e.g. Russell, 1904a, pp. 218-219; 1904c, p. 510.

245 “If it [object of judgement] did not subsist, I should be believing nothing, and therefore not believing” (Russell, 1904c, p. 510; see also Russell 1904a, p. 219). Also, Russell adds, we cannot admit the being of true propositions and deny it in the case of false ones – as Russell formulates it, propositions cannot differ intrinsically (“It is obvious that what we call believing or understanding a proposition is a fact of the same logical form whether the proposition is true or whether it is false; for if this were not so, there would be an intrinsic difference between true and false beliefs, and mere attention to the mental fact would be capable of showing whether the belief was true or whether it was false” (Russell, 1913, p. 109).

it in his article about Meinong, “some propositions are true and some false, just as some roses are red and some white”.<sup>246</sup> He initially attempted to sidestep this suspicious conclusion by claiming that the inability to mark a difference between true and false propositions proves that “there is no problem at all in truth and falsehood”.<sup>247</sup> This difference is unanalyzable, but is one that we can directly apprehended.<sup>248</sup> But, obviously, this escape manoeuvre couldn’t satisfy Russell. He immediately admits that on this account, our preference for true propositions remains a sheer mystery, “a mere unaccountable prejudice”.<sup>249</sup>

It is then not surprising that the notion of false propositions soon began to strike Russell as so dubious and plagued with inner contradictions that he eventually voted for rejecting both the being of false and true propositions – since it is equally unpersuasive to admit merely the being of true, but not false propositions.<sup>250</sup> The perplexing nature of false propositions thus gradually became the main driving force behind Russell’s abandonment of the theory of both true and false mind-independent propositions and behind his gradual acceptance of his famous multiple relation theory of judgement.

### 3.3 Russell’s Multiple-Relation Theory of Judgement

Due to the inner tensions in the notion of false propositions, Russell became more and more persuaded that he must inevitably abandon the whole concept of a proposition as a complex entity in the world. In its place, a different theory has to be introduced which will not leave the difference between true and false propositions an unexplainable mystery and which will explicate how we can make judgements about the complexes in the world without the necessity of postulating objective falsehoods. It is Russell’s famous multiple relation theory of judgement which eventually replaced the concept of propositions from the *Principles*. However, there emerged, as time went on, several versions of this theory in which Russell again

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246 Russell, 1904c, p. 523.

247 Russell, B. (1913). *Theory of Knowledge: The 1913 Manuscript*. In: E. R. Eames, ed. (1992). *Theory of Knowledge*, London and New York: Routledge, p. 109.

248 Russell, 1904c, p. 524. If the difference cannot be analysed, the distinction between true and false propositions remains inexplicable. And then, also our preference for true propositions is unaccounted for. Russell proposes that it would need to be conceived of not epistemologically, but ethically: we would be left merely with the feeling that “it is good to believe true propositions, and bad to believe false ones” (Ibid). See also Russell’s article “On The Nature of Truth” where he claims that truth and falsity are ultimate notions and “no account can be given of what makes a proposition true or false” (Russell, B. (1906-1907). On the Nature of Truth. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 7(1), pp. 28–49, p. 48).

249 Russell, 1904c, p. 523.

250 Russell 1904a, p. 219.

and again attempted to solve difficulties he discovered in his previous theories.

### 3.3.1 Changes in the Theory of Judgement

The expressly admitted serious doubts about the mind-independent nature of propositions appeared only two years after a previously discussed article, i.e. in the 1907 article “On the Nature of Truth”.<sup>251</sup> Here, Russell discusses again his notion of a false proposition, already much less persuaded about its tenability. Even if he leaves the issue, strictly speaking, unresolved here, he already introduces the basic elements of his newly invented multiple relation theory of judgement in which truth is relegated from a proposition as a complex object in the world into the judgement itself. Propositions are gradually disappearing from the discussion – objects of judgements are further referred to as *complexes* and Russell introduces his multiple relation theory of judgement as an attempt to explicate differently and more compellingly what it means – now for a judgement, not a proposition – to be true or false.

But if we suppose that we encounter here a “classical version” of Russell’s multiple relation theory, we will be surprised. This is not just because the theory is here less elaborate than it will be in its final version in 1913, but – much more importantly – because Russell describes here the judgment fact differently. While his classical multiple relation theory is peculiar in its expounding the fact of judgement as consisting of the objects the judgement is about, this earliest version of the theory postulates that a judgement consists simply of ideas. It almost seems as if Russell would have forgotten Moore’s and his own passionate critique of judgement consisting of mental representations.

As in all later accounts of multiple relation theory, Russell presents it as an answer to his problematic notion of false propositions: to avoid the necessity of accepting such dubious entities, we may attempt to conceive of judgement not as an act in which the subject is related to a single object, but as a multiple relation by which the subject is related to various objects. In terms of the 1907 theory, a judgement is not “a single state of mind” or “one idea with a complex object”, but “several related ideas”.<sup>252</sup> If we, for instance, believe that *a* is related to *b*, we are in possession of distinct *ideas* of *a*, *b* and a relation. On the side of the objects, we have the objects *a*, *b* and the relation.

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251 Russell, B. (1906-1907). On the Nature of Truth. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 7(1), pp. 28–49.

252 Ibid., p. 46; emphasis in the original.

If the judgement is true, there is, at the level of objects, a complex of objects “*a*’s being in relation to *b*”. This complex corresponds to our mutually related ideas “*a*’s being in relation to *b*”. If judgement is false, we judge that “*a* is in relation to *b*” but there is no corresponding complex “*a*’s being related to *b*”. The objects of *a*, *b* and relation all exist (or have being), but they are not mutually related. So, for instance, if we judge that “Leonard loves Penny”, our judgement is true if there is a complex in the world in which the relation *loves* unifies the objects of Leonard and Penny.<sup>253</sup> And, conversely, this judgement is false, if Leonard and Penny are not related by the relation of *loving*:

“In the event of the objects of the ideas standing in the corresponding relation, we shall say that the belief is true, or that it is belief in a *fact*. In the event of the objects not standing in the corresponding relation, there will be no objective complex corresponding to the belief, and the belief is the belief in nothing, though it is not ‘thinking of nothing’, because it is thinking of the objects of the ideas which constitute the belief.”<sup>254</sup>

Judgements, to summarize, are “complexes of ideas to which complexes of the objects of ideas may or may not correspond”.<sup>255</sup> If a judgement is understood as a relation of several ideas to several objects, then in the event of a false judgement, we do not judge nothing, but we judge falsely about the various objects of our ideas. Even if we acknowledge that a false judgement must have an object, meaning that it cannot be “of nothing”, we are not forced to accept the existence of “objective falsehoods” i.e. false propositions. The objects about which we judge are always there, although they may not be assembled into a complex which corresponds to the complex of our ideas in a judgment. In these terms, Russell secured the result that all judgements are about something, in the sense that they are related to objects, without committing himself to the being of false propositions.

As I noted above, the puzzling feature of this version of a multiple relation theory is that

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253 I do not discuss here the so called “problem of order”, i.e. the fact that from the elements *a*, *R* and *b*, I can compose two meaningful judgements: *aRb* and *bRa*. On various occasions, Russell attempted to solve this issue differently. Initially, in the *Principles of Mathematics*, he insisted that it is the relation which put the related elements in the proper order: “[i]t is a characteristic of a relation of two terms that it proceeds, so to speak, *from* one *to* the other. That is what may be called the *sense* of the relation, and is, as we shall find, the source of order and series” (Russell 1903, §94, pp. 95-96; emphasis in the original). In the *Theory of Knowledge*, however, he changed his mind and asserted that relations themselves are “neutral with regard to ‘sense’” (Russell, 1913, p. 88): “whatever a relation is, it must be symmetrical with respect to its two ends. It must not be pictured as having a hook in front and an eye behind, but as having a hook at each end, and as equally adapted for travelling in either direction” (Ibid, p. 86).

254 Russell 1906-1907, pp. 46-47, emphasis in the original. Russell did not admit the existence of particularized relations (see e.g. Russell, 1903, §55, pp. 51-53). Thus, if the proposition that “*a* loves *b*” is false, there are in the world the entities *a*, *b* and relation of loving, not the particularized relation “*a*’s love for *b*”.

255 Ibid., p. 49.

Russell introduces here judgement as consisting of several *ideas*. It is surprising since Russell argued and would argue again later against the notion of ideas being employed in the theory of judgement.<sup>256</sup> The unfitting nature of this theory in Russell's thought is evident from the fact that in the subsequent versions of multiple relation theory (from 1910, 1912 and 1913), Russell already formulates his theory of judgement with worldly entities as constituting the fact of judgement.<sup>257</sup>

This familiar form of the multiple relation theory is first presented already in a clear-cut form, in Russell's 1910 article "On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood".<sup>258</sup> The being of false propositions is here rendered not as peculiar and suspicious, but simply as unpersuasive and unacceptable – it is "almost incredible" for Russell, since it is almost impossible to believe that there could be objective falsehoods without minds judging falsely.<sup>259</sup> And if there are no false propositions, Russell repeats his argument, there are no true ones either since true and false judgements cannot differ intrinsically, i.e. in that one has an object and while the other doesn't.<sup>260</sup> And finally, the difference between truth and falsity remains unexplained if both true and false propositions are mind-independent self-subsistent entities.<sup>261</sup>

The outcome of the denial of propositions is the same as in 1907: a judgement cannot be rendered as a dual relation to a single object (a complex or a proposition) since then, it would be, in the case of false propositions, in possession of no object and, therefore, true and false judgements would differ intrinsically. And, moreover, if false judgement lacks an object, it is not for Russell a judgement at all. Therefore, similarly as in 1907, Russell opts for another alternative: for conceiving of a judgement as a *multiple* relation in which a judging person is related to every constituent of the complex about which it is judged (i.e. to what was previously called a proposition). But now, Russell presents his conviction that judgement is not composed

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256 See e. g. Russell, B. (1910a). On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood. In: *Philosophical Essays*. London: Longman, pp. 170-185, pp. 170-171; Russell 1913, pp. 139-140.

257 Russell, 1910a; Russell, B. (1912). *The Problems of Philosophy*. Reprinted in 2008, Rockville: Arc Manor, chapter XII (Truth and Falsehood), pp. 56-61; Russell, B. (1913). *Theory of Knowledge: The 1913 Manuscript*. In: E. R. Eames, ed. (1992). *Theory of Knowledge*, London and New York: Routledge.

258 Russell, B. (1910a). On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood. In B. Russell, *Philosophical Essays*, London: Longman, pp. 170-185.

259 "Thus, there will be in the world entities, not dependent upon the existence of judgements, which can be described as objective falsehoods. This is in itself almost incredible: we feel that there could be no falsehood if there were no minds to make mistakes" (Russell, 1910a, p. 176). However, we may point out, as I did in the case of Moore and as Moore himself did in criticizing Kant (see footnote 129), that the improbability of some theory does not prove its incorrectness.

260 If they do, it would "enable us (which is obviously impossible) to discover the truth or falsehood of a judgement merely by examining the intrinsic nature of the judgment" (Russell 1910a, p. 177).

261 Ibid., p. 176.

of ideas, but of objects in the world. Based on that, he is also in need of a modified version of a multiple relation theory.

Still, it holds that judgement amounts to a multiple relation related to objects, but now objects serve both as the components of the fact of judgment and as that about which judgement is (a referent of judgement). Thus, if we bring in again the previous example of “*a* loves *b*”, now the theory holds that within a judgement, the objects *a*, *love* and *b* are unified by a judgmental relation, while at the level of objects about which we judge, we have – if the judgement is true – the unified complex “*a* loves *b*”. If the judgement is false, we encounter only *a*, *b*, and *love*, but they are not related by the relation of “love” and do not form a unified complex.

As for the relation within the judgement, if we say, for instance, “Leonard loves Penny”, we have a judgement composed of the judging subject and the term *Leonard*, the relation *love* and the term *Penny*. These components are, however, not related by the relation *love*, but by the *judgemental relation* – it is the act of subject’s judging that takes up the role of a relating relation within the judgement. As Russell notes in his summary of multiple relation theory in the *Problems of Philosophy*, within the judgement the relation of *love* is not a “cement” which binds the elements – it does not function as a relating relation. It is rather only one of the “brick[s] in the structure”<sup>262</sup>, i.e. it is at the same level as the objects *Leonard* and *Penny*.

Now let’s have a look at the level of objects about which we judge. There are the same objects as the objects in the judgment (only in judgment, there is also present a judging subject), but when they are related, it is the relation of *love* which unites them into the complex which is the object of judgement. The relation *love* thus clearly has a relating role here. If the judgement is true (Leonard really loves Penny), the components of judgement (the judging subject and the objects Leonard, love, and Penny) are put together by means of the judgemental relation and *at the same time* the objects as referents of judgement are related by the relating relation of loving into the worldly complex of Leonard’s loving Penny. If, on the other hand, the judgement is false, the judging subject and objects Leonard, love and Penny are related within the judgement by the judgemental relation, but as referents of judgement, they are not related by the relation of loving – there is not a corresponding complex Leonard’s loving Penny, but only disconnected

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262 Russell, 1912, p. 60.

elements of Leonard, Penny and loving.

In the manuscript *The Theory of Knowledge* from 1913, which we will focus on in more detailed in the next chapter, Russell introduces yet another element into the judgment: a form. According to the explanation which Russell provides here, this new element is necessary to explain how the objects within a judgment may be arranged in a proper order. This clarification is reputedly needed since Russell is now persuaded that the “relation of understanding alone”, i.e. the judgemental relation, does not suffice to bring together the objects in the judgment in the correct order. Thus, we are in need of a form to explain how it happens that we may arrange the objects in judgment in a proper way. In addition to the judgmental relation, we need to understand how objects may be arranged – which is achieved precisely by putting them into the appropriate places within the form.<sup>263</sup> In the next section, I will attempt to explicate whether and how the objections against Russell theory of judgment are (also) applicable to this last account including the notion of a form.<sup>264</sup>

### 3.3.2 Russell’s Correspondence Theory

Russell’s multiple relation theory can be presented as a special version of a correspondence theory: on the one hand, there is a judgmental complex, and on the other, a worldly complex to which the judgment does or does not correspond, and is accordingly true or false. There are two objections which treat differently the issue of correspondence in Russell’s theory and which both end up condemning the theory as a flawed account of judgement. However, as I will attempt to show now, they both are based on a misreading of Russell’s account.

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263 “In an actual complex, the general form is not presupposed; but when we are concerned with a proposition which may be false and where, therefore, the actual complex is not given, we have only, as it were, the ‘idea’ or ‘suggestion’ of the terms being united in such a complex; and this, evidently, requires that the general form of the merely supposed complex should be given. More simply, in order to understand ‘*A* and *B* are similar’, we must know what is supposed to be done with *A* and *B* and similarity, i.e. what it is for two terms to have a relation; that is, we must understand the form of the complex which must exist if the proposition is true” (Russell, 1913, p. 116); “It is difficult”, Russell claims, “to see how we could possibly understand how”, for instance, “Socrates and Plato and ‘precedes’ are to be combined unless we had acquaintance with the form of the complex” (Ibid, p. 99).

264 Apart from more general objections to Russell’s multiple relation theory which treat the notion of a form as part of broader complications of the theory, the notion of a form, as introduced in the *Theory of Knowledge*, is complicated in itself – once, Russell denies it is a thing and another constituent of a judgement complex ([i]t is not a ‘thing’, not another constituent along with the objects that were previously related in that form”; Russell 1913, p. 93); later it is also defined as “something exceedingly simple” (Ibid., p. 113) and as “the fact that there are entities that make up complexes having the form in question” (Ibid., p. 114). How to put all these descriptions of the form together? It is not, for instance, explained how something may be a fact and something “exceedingly simple” at the same time.



The first objection comes from Russell's contemporary, G. F. Stout, the other from a recent interpreter of Russell's philosophy, Stewart Candlish. In 1914, G. F. Stout published an article "Mr. Russell's Theory of Judgement" where he wholly devoted himself to the analysis and criticism of Russell's multiple relation theory.<sup>265</sup> Stout points out here that Russell acts as if he is an advocate of a correspondence theory of truth, but he actually shouldn't be allowed to do so, since the judgement complex (composed of a judging subject, judgmental relating relation and objects) and the complex of objects which forms the referent of judgement do not, so to say, correspond enough.<sup>266</sup>

The internal problem, which Stout identifies in Russell's theory, resides in the fact that two complexes which should correspond actually contain such entities that the relation of correspondence cannot be realized. Not only does the judgement complex contain also a judging subject but also, and more importantly, a relating relation, which relates terms in the corresponding complex in the world (if the judgment is true), is not relating in the judgmental complex – instead there is a judgmental relation which relates objects within judgemental complex.<sup>267</sup> Complexes are thus *not similar enough* since the judgement complex includes more elements than the complex referred to and since within it, the role of relating relation is taken over by the judgemental relation.

Candlish, on the other hand, endeavours to argue that Russell's two complexes correspond, so to say, *too much* – they are so similar that they actually coalesce into one complex. When judgement is true, Candlish claims, "judgement and judged fact coalesce, the former absorbing the latter as proper part".<sup>268</sup> The image Candlish has in mind is that there are two complexes while the one of them (actual complex) eventually amounts only to the part of the latter (judgement complex): the judgement complex contains judging subject and the worldly objects while the complex about which is judged contains only these objects. Thus, we may supposedly conclude, the complex as a referent of judgment is actually a mere part of the judgement complex.

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265 Stout, G. F. (1914). Mr. Russell's Theory of Judgment. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 15, pp. 332-352.

266 Ibid., p. 344; see also Schaar 2013a, p. 103.

267 "[t]he belief [...] corresponds with the fact when there is an actual complex comprising all the constituents of the judgement complex except the mind, and unified, not by the judgement-relation, but by the relation of loving" (Stout, 1914, p. 341).

268 Candlish, S. (2007). *The Russell/Bradley Dispute and its Significance for Twentieth-Century Philosophy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 65.

Both Candlish's and Stout's accounts clearly put forward the criticism to the effect that Russell's theory cannot be accounted for a correspondence theory of truth even if they think so for contrasting reasons: i.e. because two entities which should correspond coalesce (Candlish), or are too dissimilar to really correspond (Stout). Since Russell's multiple relation theory rests on the claim that judgement complex is composed of the objects about which it is judged (with the addition of the judging subject), it is undeniable that the presented correspondence theory differs from the more traditional versions of it in which the relation of correspondence holds between mental phenomena (ideas, mind-dependent concepts etc.) and the objects in the world.

The specificity of Russell's correspondence theory leads, according to Candlish, to the coalescence of judgmental and worldly complex: since the judgement complex contains worldly objects and the judging subject, the worldly complex, which should correspond to the judgmental complex, is actually contained in it as its part, since it consists merely of the worldly objects. However, I don't think that Russell's theory is susceptible to this objection. He indeed holds that, when a judgement is true, some of the elements within judgmental and worldly complex are the same: If I judge that "*a* loves *b*" and my judgment is true, there is in the world complex "*a*'s love for *b*" and my judgment consists of the same objects *a*, *love* and *b* and the judging subject. But still, there are two complexes – the judgmental and the actual complex – and there is no need to suppose that they collapse into one complex.

For Stout, on the other hand, the complexes can correspond only if they are similar enough which, in Russell's case, Stout understands as meaning that these complexes are composed only of the same elements. But, contra Stout, it may be objected that complexes don't need to be composed only of the same objects to correspond. If I judge that "*a* loves *b*", my judgment "*a* loves *b*" corresponds, if it is true, to the worldly complex "*a*'s love for *b*". The fact that objects are put together, within a judgmental complex, by the relating relation performed by judging subject does not preclude the possibility of correspondence: complexes don't need to be, or even may not be, completely identical to stay in a relation of correspondence.

To conclude this chapter, it is appropriate to return to the broader topic of the thesis and pose the question of whether, by accepting that truth and falsity apply only to judgements, of which a judging mind is a component – and therefore that in a world without minds there would no truth or falsity –, Russell did not reassess the transcendental idealists' persuasion about the crucial role of judgmental act and the judging subject. However, it seems to me that a closer investigation of Russell's multiple relation theory does not reveal this influence. It is not merely

that Russell still considers judgement to be composed of worldly objects rather than representations, but more importantly that a judging subject does not actually play any substantial role in the multiple relation theory. True, the subject is the actor who carries out the judgmental relation which binds the elements of judgmental complex together. But eventually, it is neither the subject, nor the judgemental relation which guarantees the proper arrangement of terms in the judgement complex. A judging subject provides the judgment with no rules and restrictions which would guarantee that we will not end up judging nonsense or that we will assemble the terms in a judgment in a correct order. With these considerations, we are already approaching the objection which a young Wittgenstein raised against Russell's multiple relation theory of judgement in 1913. Let us thus move to this objection.

## 4. The Russell-Wittgenstein Debate

In 1911, Wittgenstein arrived at Cambridge to work under Russell and soon came to be considered by him a prodigious young man and potential disciple. At that time, the most recent contribution Russell made to the theory of judgement was the section concerning truth and falsehood in his 1912 *The Problems of Philosophy* where he repeated the substantial parts of his 1910 article “On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood”.<sup>269</sup> When he began to write the manuscript named *Theory of Knowledge* in the spring of 1913,<sup>270</sup> his overall intention was to write a book divided into an analytic and a constructive part. The former was intended to single out and enumerate basic elements of knowledge, while the latter part, drawing on the first, should have contained the account concerning the construction of moments of space, time and matter.<sup>271</sup>

The theory of judgement was needed in the analytic part in order to explain how we make judgements about elementary and more complex (“molecular”) complexes. In the *Theory of Knowledge* Russell came up with a revised version of the multiple relation theory which included the new notion of a *form* inserted into the judgement complex. The first reference to Wittgenstein’s reaction to Russell’s working on the *Theory of Knowledge* is to be found in Russell’s diary dated 14 May 1913.<sup>272</sup> On 21 May, Russell wrote in his letter to Ottoline Morell that Wittgenstein came last night (thus on 20 May) with “a refutation of the theory of judgement which I used to hold”:

“Wittgenstein came to see me last night with a refutation of the theory of judgement which I used to hold. He was right, but I think the correction required is not very serious. I shall have to make up my mind within a week, as I shall soon reach judgement.”<sup>273</sup>

In this comment, Russell does not expressly mention which of the theories he “used to

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269 Russell, B. (1912). *The Problems of Philosophy*. Reprinted in 2008, Rockville: Arc Manor, chapter 12 (“Truth and Falsehood”).

270 Russell’s manuscript was named by its editors, but Russell himself mentioned this title in his letters and on other occasions. For more details see Russell, 1913, Introduction from Elizabeth Ramsden Eames, xiv.

271 Ibid., Introduction, xv. Russell to Morrell, #768, 8 May 1913. The originals of all Russell’s letters to Ottoline Morrell quoted here are at the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, and a microfilm copy is in the Bertrand Russell Archives, McMaster University. In citing from the letters, I quote from the Introduction to Russell, 1913.

272 Russell, 1913, Introduction, xix.

273 Ibid., Russell to Morrell, #782, 21 May 1913.

hold” he has in mind. However, it is plausible that he refers to a version of a multiple relation theory as presented in the 1910 article. (1912’s *The Problems of Philosophy* was downplayed by Wittgenstein as a popular book and probably wasn’t mentioned in the discussion with Russell at all.<sup>274</sup>) Then, during late May and the beginning of June, several other exchanges between Russell and Wittgenstein took place. Russell was initially concerned, but nevertheless persuaded that he would be able to avoid Wittgenstein’s objections with a relatively easy correction to his theory. As he mentioned in the comment quoted above, “I think the correction required is not very serious. I shall have to make up my mind within a week, as I shall soon reach judgement.”

For the next week, Russell was indeed rewriting the theory of judgement, probably producing the one we know from the *Theory of Knowledge*, i.e. the account of judgement that includes the notion of a form. However, in that short period of time he became gradually more and more disquieted by Wittgenstein’s criticism. After another discussion (on 26 May), he concluded that he couldn’t really make sense of Wittgenstein’s comments – since Wittgenstein was quite “inarticulate” – but he also felt “that he [Wittgenstein] must be right”:

“Wittgenstein came to see me – we were both cross from the heat – I showed him a crucial part of what I have been writing. He said it was all wrong, not realizing the difficulties – that he had tried my view and knew it wouldn’t work. I couldn’t understand his objection – in fact he was very inarticulate – but I feel in my bones that he must be right, and that he has seen something I have missed. If I could see it too I shouldn’t mind, but as it is, it is worrying, and has rather destroyed the pleasure in my writing.”<sup>275</sup>

On 31 May, Russell informed Ottoline Morrell that he could “circumvent Wittgenstein’s problems” if he couldn’t solve them and that “he had recovered from the criticisms”.<sup>276</sup> However, it wasn’t probably quite true, since around 7 June he stopped working on the manuscript for good, leaving it unfinished with as much as 350 pages written.<sup>277</sup> Later, on 19 June, Wittgenstein eventually came up with what he – at least – considered to be an absolutely clearly stated objection against Russell’s theory:

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274 Russell, 1913, Introduction, xix.

275 Russell to Morrell, 27 May 1913; in N. Griffin, ed. (2002). *The Selected Letters of Bertrand Russell*, London: Routledge, p. 446.

276 Russell to Morrell, #791, 3 May 1913; in: Russell, 2013, Introduction, xix.

277 See Russell, 1913, Introduction, xvii.

“I can now express my objection to your theory of judgement exactly: I believe it is obvious that, from the proposition ‘A judges that (say) *a* is in a relation *R* to *b*’, if correctly analysed, the proposition ‘*aRb*  $\vee$   $\sim$  *aRb*’ must follow directly *without the use of any other premiss*. This condition is not fulfilled by your theory.”<sup>278</sup>

This is probably Wittgenstein’s final word on Russell’s manuscript *Theory of Knowledge* from that time since he was assured now that he had expressed his objection exactly. Russell eventually wrote to Ottoline that his conversation with Wittgenstein and the objection(s) Wittgenstein put forward presented “an event of the first rate importance” in his life and that he could no longer hope to do any more “fundamental work in philosophy”, i.e. nothing concerning logic or epistemology.<sup>279</sup> Wittgenstein acknowledged that his objection(s) presented a serious attack on Russell’s theory, mentioning that he was “very sorry to hear that my objection to your theory of judgement paralyses you”.<sup>280</sup> Though sorry, Wittgenstein was persuaded that the criticism was necessary, since Russell had omitted an essential foundation for a correct theory of judgement, namely “a correct apprehension of the form of the proposition”.<sup>281</sup> For some time, Russell was at a loss as to what to do with his theory of judgement, turning his attention to the preparation of his USA lectures for which another topic was chosen.<sup>282</sup>

If we wish to account for Wittgenstein’s criticism, it is important to add that, apart from the previous comments on Russell’s theory of judgement, we also have two additional formulations of this criticism, namely those included in the *Notes on Logic* and in the *Tractatus*:

“Every right theory of judgement must make it impossible for me to judge that this table penholders the book. Russell’s theory does not satisfy this requirement.”<sup>283</sup>

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278 Letter to Morrell, 19 June 1913; in: Griffin 2002, p. 448; emphasis in the original.

279 “Do you remember that at a time [...] I wrote a lot of stuff about *Theory of Knowledge*, which Wittgenstein criticized with the greatest severity? His criticism [...] was an event of first-rate importance in my life, and affected everything I have done since. I saw he was right, and I saw that I could not hope ever again to do fundamental work in philosophy” (Russell to Ottoline Morrell, 4 March 1916, quoted in Russell, B. (1975). *Autobiography*. London: George Allen & Unwin. Reprinted in 1998, London: Routledge, p. 282).

280 Wittgenstein, L. (2008). *Wittgenstein in Cambridge: Letters and Documents 1911-1951*. London and New York: Routledge, p. 42.

281 “The epistemological questions concerning the nature of judgment and belief cannot be solved without a correct apprehension of the form of the proposition” (Wittgenstein, L. *Notes on Logic*, The Birmingham Notes. In: Potter, 2008, B55, p. 283. When I refer to the *Notes on Logic* further in the text and footnotes, I will use the abbreviation *NL*, together with the B (Birmingham version of the Notes) or C (Cambridge version) and a number of the remark.

282 For more details concerning Russell’s American lectures (Lowell Lectures held during the spring term 1914 at Harvard University) see Russell 1913, Introduction, xiv.

283 Wittgenstein, *NL*, B33, in Potter, 2008, p. 280.

“The correct explanation of the form of the proposition ‘A judges p’ must show that it is impossible to judge a nonsense. (Russell’s theory does not satisfy this *condition*.)”<sup>284</sup>

## 4.1 Standard and Other Interpretations of Wittgenstein’s Criticism

### 4.1.1 Standard Interpretation

In order to come to terms with Wittgenstein’s objection, let’s initially look at the various interpretations of it offered within Wittgensteinian scholarship. To begin with, there is a reading of the objection which Peter Hanks dubbed as “standard”<sup>285</sup> and whose classical formulation is attributed to Stephen Somerville and Nicolas Griffin.<sup>286</sup> In a nutshell, this objection points out the mutual dependence of Russell’s theory of judgement and his theory of types. The theory of types presupposes the multiple relation theory of judgement while the multiple relation theory in turn presupposes the theory of types. Without going into technical details, let’s look at why these theories are supposed by Somerville and Griffin to be mutually required.

Under Russell’s theory of judgement, the judgement that “*a* loves *b*” has the form  $J(S, a, R, b)$  or, with the addition of the form in the *Theory of Knowledge*,  $J(S, a, R, b, x\theta y)$ , i.e. it includes the judging subject (*S*), the elements *a*, *R*, *b* and the form.<sup>287</sup> However, Somerville and Griffin insist, it cannot be assured that this judgement is significant without employing further premises. To be specific, we need to stipulate that *a* and *b* are individuals, *R* is a first-order relation and  $x\theta y$  is the general form of a dual complex. However, to introduce these stipulations would require further judgements – that *a* is an individual, *R* is a relation etc. If we wish to assert that *a* and *b* are suitable arguments for the first-order relation (here *loving*), we need to

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<sup>284</sup> Wittgenstein, L. (1921). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Trans. by C. K. Ogden (1922, London: Routledge) and later by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness. (2001, London: Routledge). I will mostly refer to Pears and McGuinness’ translation; if I quote Ogden’s translation, I will mention it explicitly. Further I will refer to the *Tractatus* merely as *TLP*; 5.5422.

<sup>285</sup> Hanks, P. W. (2007). How Wittgenstein Defeated Russell’s Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment. *Synthese*, 154(1), pp. 121-146, p. 122ff.

<sup>286</sup> Somerville, S. (1980). Wittgenstein to Russell (July, 1913). ‘I am Very Sorry to Hear... My Objection Paralyzes You’. In: R. Haller and W. Grassl, eds., *Language, Logic, and Philosophy: Proceedings of the 4th International Wittgenstein Symposium*, Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, pp. 182-188 and Griffin, N. (1985). Russell’s Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment. *Philosophical Studies*, 47, pp. 213–247.

<sup>287</sup> In this case, the form is the general form of dual complexes which Russell most often symbolizes “ $xRy$ ” (Russell, 1913, p. 98ff, 113ff, 129ff.). In words, we may formulate this form as “something has some relation to something” (Ibid., p. 114). A “dual complex” is an atomic complex which contains one relating relation and two other terms (see Ibid., p. 80). Similarly, relations which can be relating in dual complexes may be called “dual relations” (Ibid.).



make a judgement of higher than first-order.<sup>288</sup>

However, Russell and Whitehead insist in *Principia Mathematica* that higher-order judgements need to be defined cumulatively on lower-order judgements.<sup>289</sup> Thus, we cannot presuppose the higher-order judgements in the analysis of lower-order ones. In our case, we cannot presuppose the ability to carry out e.g. a judgement that “*a* is an individual” to guarantee the significance of the judgement that “*a* loves *b*”. If however, the argument continues, Russell cannot use these higher-order judgements, then nonsensical judgement becomes possible since we may put into the empty places in the form something not suitable to these positions (e.g. another form). But, the argument unfolds, if there can be nonsensical judgements, the propositions which emerge cannot be regimented by type theory.<sup>290</sup>

There are several objections against this “classical” reading which mostly put an emphasis on the paucity of both Russell’s and Wittgenstein’s remarks about the theory of types in their correspondence in 1913, where they discussed Russell’s theory of judgement. In this context, it is often noted that any reference to the theory of types is missing from almost all letters dealing with the theory of judgement Wittgenstein addressed to Russell, as well as from his formulation in the *Notes on Logic* and *Tractatus*.<sup>291</sup> In the *Notes on Logic*, theory of types is mentioned, but appears in a different place and context from the objection concerning the possibility of judging nonsense.<sup>292</sup> In the *Tractatus*, the claim about the possibility of judging nonsense within Russell’s theory is numbered 5.5422 which makes it a comment to 5.54, namely to a section devoted to the issue of general propositional form. On the other hand, Wittgenstein only alludes to theory of types in the remarks 3.3s, a completely different part of the *Tractatus*.

A sole exception to this absence of a connecting link between the theory of judgement and the theory of types in Wittgenstein’s writings occurs in his oft-cited letter from January

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288 Somerville, 1980, p. 187; Griffin, 1985, p. 242. If we wish to assert that *a* and *b* are suitable arguments for the first-order relation (here *loving*), we need to make a judgement of higher than first-order.

289 Whitehead, A. N. and Russell, B. (1910). *Principia Mathematica I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in 1997, *Principia Mathematica to \*56*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Book I, ch. 2, III (Definition and Systematic Ambiguity of Truth and Falsehood), pp. 41-47.

290 Griffin, 1985, p. 145.

291 Hanks, 2007, pp. 134-135.

292 The objection concerning possibility of judging nonsense appears in *NL*, B39/C33, while the “theory of types” is mentioned in *NL*, B76/C46 where it concerns the fact that “a proposition cannot occur in itself” (Potter, 2008, pp. 288-289).

1913.<sup>293</sup> There, he proposes an analysis of atomic (elementary) complexes in which all qualities and relations are considered “copulae”. The reasoning behind this proposal is that “there cannot be different Types of things. In other words, whatever can be symbolized by a simple proper name must belong to one type”.<sup>294</sup> And, Wittgenstein immediately adds, “every theory of types must be rendered superfluous by a proper theory of symbolism”.<sup>295</sup> Thus if, for instance, the proposition “Socrates is mortal” is analysed into Socrates, mortality and  $(\exists x,y)\in_1(x,y)$  (intended to represent the copula of a subject-predicate proposition, with the verbal form “Something is predicated of something”), there needs to be an additional “theory of types” which can demonstrate that “Mortality is Socrates” is a nonsensical proposition, i.e. in the words of *Principles of Mathematics*, that Socrates is a non-relating term and mortality is a verbal noun formed from potentially relating term “to be mortal”. In contrast, if the same proposition is analysed, as Wittgenstein here proposes, into Socrates and an intrinsically copulative form  $(\exists x)\phi x$ . I cannot assemble these components so that nonsensical proposition “Mortality is Socrates” could possibly ensue.

When we attend to the example provided, however, we will eventually have to conclude that what Wittgenstein describes here as a “theory of types” is not identical to what Russell gives the label to. While Russell’s theory of types deals with the discriminations of judgments on the higher level, Wittgenstein’s example focuses on the discrimination of terms on the elementary level of judgment. To this essential difference, we may also add that Wittgenstein works here with the analysis of propositions which he soon abandoned<sup>296</sup>, namely one which analyses a subject-predicate proposition into the subject and a subject-predicate form. And, finally, while the discussion between Russell and Wittgenstein regarding the theory of judgement does not take place until May and June 1913, the cited letter containing the remark about types dates from January that year, meaning there is almost a half year gap between the events. This further supports my conviction that Wittgenstein’s “theory of types” from the January letter does not coincide with Russell’s theory of the same name and that it therefore cannot serve as a counterexample to the absence of to the theory of types related discussion between Russell and Wittgenstein.

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293 Wittgenstein, 2008, p. 38.

294 Ibid.

295 Ibid.

296 And which is very similar to Russell’s analysis of a form in the *Theory of Knowledge*; see Potter, 2008, p. 110.

The last thing to add, even if it is not a direct proof, may be that the discussion of the theory of types is also completely missing from Russell's letters to Ottoline Morrell. In itself, this is hardly surprising – even philosophers are probably able to realize that to charm a woman you should choose other topics than highly technical discussions on the foundations of logic. However, the fact is that Russell did mention to Ottoline several details concerning his theory of judgement, even if he mostly commented on the emotional devastation Wittgenstein's rather incomprehensible criticism left him in. In this respect, I would be inclined to believe that if the essential point of Wittgenstein's criticism was (or at least had been understood by Russell to be) an incompatibility of theories of types and of judgement, Russell would have at least mentioned the theory of types by name.

Finally, there is an objection raised by Michael Potter based on his thorough investigations not only of Wittgenstein's philosophy itself, but also his style of work and the general features of his arguments. In this context, Potter points out that it is extremely improbable that Wittgenstein would ground his argument against Russell's theory of judgement on technical issues concerned with its relation to the theory of types.<sup>297</sup> Wittgenstein was, according to Potter, "neither competent with the formal details of Russell's theory of types nor much concerned at any point in his career to offer complex technical arguments of the kind Griffin suggests".<sup>298</sup> Also, Potter adds, the mere fact that the criticism of Russell's theory of judgement is repeated in the *Tractatus* suggests that the argument has never been concerned with the technicalities of the theory of types. I find these suggestions and Potter's discussions of Wittgenstein's argumentative style persuasive and I consider them as additional evidence against the Somerville-Griffin interpretation. For all these reasons, I believe that the mutual dependence of the theory of types on one side and the theory of judgment on the other wasn't the underlying reason behind Russell's shelving of his multiple relation theory.<sup>299</sup> This

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297 Potter, 2008, pp. 193-195. I mention here only the fact that according to classical interpretation, Wittgenstein's objection was to the effect that Russell's theory of judgement and theory of types are mutually circularly dependent on each other. However, both Griffin and Somerville go into very precise details of how higher order judgements are implemented into elementary ones to show *why* exactly these theories presuppose each other. Potter's point is that Wittgenstein was never concerned with those very technical details of the theory of types. I do not mention here these technicalities. Even if so, I believe Potter's argument regarding Wittgenstein's style of criticism (not concerned with technical details of philosophical theories) is still comprehensible.

298 Potter, 2008, pp. 129-30; also mentioned in Johnston, C. (2012). Russell, Wittgenstein and Synthesis in Thought. In: J. L. Zalabardo, ed., *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 15-36, pp. 24-25.

299 The last thing worth adding is that Russell mentions in his own remarks the theory of types in connection with the debates with Wittgenstein only once, namely in the unpublished, handwritten notes titled *Props* (i.e. "Propositions") which were found along with the manuscript of the *Theory of Knowledge* (Blackwell, K. and Eames, E. R., eds. (1984). *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell. Volume 7: Theory of Knowledge: The 1913*

inevitably leads us to the question of what the true reason was. It will be the aim of the next section to answer this question.

#### 4.1.2 Other Interpretations – Problems of Truth, Correspondence and Synthesis

Apart from the “standard” interpretation of the Russell-Wittgenstein debate, there is a second style of interpretation that is nowadays widespread and generally accepted. Most interpreters now agree that Wittgenstein’s objection to Russell’s theory of judgement has something to do with what is called a “narrow-” and “wide-direction problem”. The narrow direction problem (also referred to simply as the “direction problem”) is the objection that Russell is unable to ensure, in the case of so-called non-symmetrical permutative complexes (those which allow more than one non-equivalent combination of their terms) that we will end up judging one thing rather than the other (e.g. that we will judge “that *a* loves *b*” and not “that *b* loves *a*”).<sup>300</sup> It is referred to as the “narrow-direction problem” because the judgements it refers to at least make sense. The “wide-direction problem” (also called the “unity problem”) is even more far-reaching, since it points out that Russell’s theory allows us to assemble the elements of a judgement complex non-meaningfully – i.e. we may not only judge that “*a* loves *b*” or “*b* loves *a*” (as in the narrow-direction problem), but also that “*a* *bs* love” or “Love *as* *b*” etc.

My further discussion of Wittgenstein’s objection will focus on these issues, but indirectly. What I wish to do is pick out those interpretations of the authors who assert that the core difficulty that Wittgenstein pointed out to Russell resided neither in the direction- nor the unity problem, but in a deeper difficulty inherent in the multiple relation theory – while each of these authors locates this central difficulty in a slightly different place. This approach arises

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*Manuscript*. London and New York: Routledge, Appendix BI, pp. 195-199). As editors note (*Ibid.*, p. 195), it is probable that this manuscript was written almost immediately after the discussion with Wittgenstein in late May. Here, Russell introduces a highly controversial and never really accepted notion of a “neutral fact” – every judgement, whether true or false, includes a neutral fact which replaces the form introduced in the *Theory of Knowledge*. In the concluding remark, Russell states that “[t]here will only be a neutral fact when the objects are of the right types” (*Ibid.*, p. 199). However, the sketchiness of the remarks as well as the absence of the notion of neutral fact from any other writings is probably a sufficient reason for not putting an excessive interpretative weight on these remarks.

<sup>300</sup> In the *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell distinguishes three types of complexes: non-permutative, permutative symmetrical and permutative non-symmetrical (Russell, 1913, pp. 122-123). Non-permutative are those complexes in which there is only one way to assemble their elements, e.g. “*a* is an element of *A*”. Permutative complexes, on the other hand, allow at least two combinations of their elements. Within them, symmetrical are those complexes in which all ways of elements’ composition produce the complex with the same meaning, e.g. “*a* is similar to *b*” and “*b* is similar to *a*”. And, finally, permutative, yet non-symmetrical are those complexes whose various compositions of elements generate complexes with different meanings, e.g. “*a* is bigger than *b*” and “*b* is bigger than *a*”. It is those last ones which present a difficulty for Russell’s theory.

from my impression that Wittgenstein didn't only wish to persuade Russell that his theory allowed incorrectly assembled judgement complexes, but also that this was a symptom of its being based, in all its variants, on essentially flawed foundations.<sup>301</sup>

I will therefore attend here only to those interpretations which seem to recognize that Wittgenstein's objection not only targeted the direction and unity problems but that it also alluded to other, additional, and potentially more serious difficulties. In what follows, I will concentrate on the exposition and critical evaluation of three interpretations which I take to surpass the wide- and narrow-direction problems, namely that of Peter Hanks, Colin Johnston and Christopher Pincock. Each of these authors points in different ways beyond the direction- and unity problems, but each of them also emphasizes, I believe, some important aspects of what was going on in the Russell-Wittgenstein debate. I will begin by summarizing each interpretation before going on to explain, with reference to these views, what I consider to be at the centre of Wittgenstein's criticism.

#### **(a) Hanks – Truth and Falsity**

According to the interpretation put forward by Peter Hanks, Wittgenstein's objection to the multiple relation theory was, in effect, "essentially the same one that was fatal for Russell's theory of propositions", namely the familiar problem of propositional (and later judgmental) unity.<sup>302</sup> However, while it initially seems that Hanks will go on to assert that the central difficulty resides in this unity problem (now of the unity of terms – apart from a judging subject – within a judgement complex), he eventually ends up insisting that the Russell-Wittgenstein dispute essentially revolves around the problem of judgment's truth and falsity. To be more specific, Wittgenstein has shown to Russell, according to Hanks, that his multiple relation theory does not produce any truth-bearer which may be true or false.<sup>303</sup>

What is Hanks' point here? On Russell's theory of judgement, when one judges he produces a judgement complex whose constituents (e.g. those of a judging subject, *a*, *love* and *b* in "*a loves b*") are mutually connected by means of the judgemental relation. In the *Theory*

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301 This may be suggested by the fact that Wittgenstein replied to Russell, after going through his manuscript of the *Theory of knowledge*, that "it was all wrong" (Russell's letter to Morrell, 28 May 1913 reports Wittgenstein's visit on 26<sup>th</sup> May, see Russell, 1913, Introduction, xix). It is not that the new introduction of the form is problematic in itself but rather that the multiple relation theory as a whole is "all wrong".

302 Hanks, 2007, p. 122.

303 Ibid., p. 138ff.

of *Knowledge*, Russell also introduced the notion of a form – in that case, in the judgement that “*a loves b*”, *a*, *love* and *b* are put by means of the judgemental relation into the proper places within the form of a dual relation ( $xRy$ ).

Hanks proposes that the central objection Wittgenstein raised against this theory is that within Russell’s description of judgement, a judgement cannot be either true or false, since the elements *a*, *b* and *R* are within it merely collected, but not unified. However, Hanks goes on, merely “a collection of items, even if they are of right number and variety of types, is not the sort of thing that can be true or false and hence not the sort of thing that can be judged”.<sup>304</sup> These terms within a judgement are in Hanks’ words “disunified and separate”, meaning they are brought together in nothing more than a “disunified collection”.<sup>305</sup>

According to Hanks, this is itself the consequence of the fact that within the judgement complex, the terms are merely *associated* with respective positions in a logical form – for instance, in the judgement that “*a loves b*”, *a* is paired with *x*, *love* with *R* and *b* with *y* of the logical form  $xRy$ . This pairing alone, Hanks claims, will not produce anything which can be true or false.<sup>306</sup> To achieve something to which we can ascribe truth or falsity, “[s]ome further act of *predicating* or *applying* [relating term] to the pair [of non-relating terms] seems necessary”.<sup>307</sup> However, Hanks is persuaded that nothing of this kind is present in Russell’s theory.

This objection is applicable to Russell’s multiple relation theory quite generally, i.e. to all its various formulations (also if it does not contain the notion of a form).<sup>308</sup> It is therefore independent of any particular formulation of the theory and it is directed against any theory which accounts for a judgement as an act in which subject stands in a multiple relation to terms which are unified by judgemental relation either with or without the help of a form.<sup>309</sup>

To persuade us that Wittgenstein targeted precisely this issue of truth or falsity of judgement, Hanks quotes and comments upon a remark found in Wittgenstein’s *Notes on Logic*:

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304 Ibid., p. 138.

305 Ibid.

306 Ibid., p. 127.

307 Ibid., emphasis in the original.

308 Whether or not judgement includes the form, it still will be true, according to Hanks, that it consists merely of mutually associated, not predicated elements.

309 Ibid.

“When we say A judges that etc., then we have to mention a whole proposition which A judges. It will not do either to mention only its constituents, or its constituents and form, but not in the proper order. This shows that a proposition itself must occur in the statement that it is judged; however, for instance, ‘not-p’ may be explained, the question, ‘What is negated’ must have a meaning.”<sup>310</sup>

Here, Wittgenstein emphasizes that if we negate a statement, the question “what is negated” must be meaningful. The same then holds for a judgement – when we ask “what is judged?”, our answer must have a meaning. Wittgenstein’s point then is, Hanks asserts, that it is exactly this requirement which is not met by Russell’s theory of judgement: on Russell’s theory, if asked “what do you judge?”, one’s answer may only be that I judge *a*, *R* and *b*, i.e. several disunified elements. This does not amount to a meaningful answer since what I really judge, and what can be true or false, needs to be unified (in our case it is judged that *aRb*, not that *a*, *R* and *b*). When Wittgenstein criticises Russell for not ruling out the possibility of nonsensical judgement, he contends, according to Hanks, that any collection of terms present in the judgement complex cannot be true or false, since it amounts merely to a “disunified collection” of elements. Thus, Hanks in effect claims that on Russell’s theory, *any* judgement would be nonsensical, since no judgement which contains a disunified collection of elements can be true or false: “When *R* is a term, ‘*a R’s b*’ is just as nonsensical as ‘the table penholders the book’.”<sup>311</sup>

### (b) Johnston – Synthesis in Thought

Let’s turn our attention now to another interpretation that considers Wittgenstein’s objection to go beyond the direction- and unity problem. In his rendering, Colin Johnston proposes that the objection’s key purpose is to demonstrate that Russell “fails to explain an atomic judgement’s representation of entities as combined”.<sup>312</sup> This failure is alleged to result from the fact that Russell’s multiple relation theory is based on the general theory of complexes which Russell elaborated in the *Theory of Knowledge*. A complex, like a proposition in the

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310 Wittgenstein, *NL*, B21, C29.

311 Hanks, 2007, p. 138. This expression suggests that, in Hanks’ view, the incapacity of terms within a judgmental complex to form a unified whole is related to the problem of non-relating relation: it seems to follow from the fact that an initially relating relation is non-relating within a judgment. What is missing is an act of predication of the relation to related terms. However, one may ask why this act of predication cannot be realized by a judgmental relation. It seems that Hanks presupposes that if it is not produced by the relation as a term, a judgmental relation cannot realize it either.

312 Johnston, 2012, p. 15.



*Principles of Mathematics*, is anything which has constituents.<sup>313</sup> These constituents have “modes of occurring” in complexes, meaning that each constituent (term) occurs in a complex in a particular way. The way a constituent may occur in the complex is determined by its “logical type” and the term’s capacity to occur and function in complexes in certain ways may be dubbed as its “logical possibility”.<sup>314</sup>

What Johnston considers essential, since it will lay the ground for Wittgenstein’s criticism, is that within the theory of complexes, Russell is committed to the so called “principle of substitutability” which claims that:

“if there is a logically possible complex  $A$  in which entity  $e_1$  appears in a mode  $m$  (e.g. as a term, as dual relating relation) and a logically possible complex  $B$  in which a second entity  $e_2$  appears in the same mode  $m$ , then there is a logically possible complex  $A'$  which is the result of substituting  $e_2$  in for  $e_1$  in any position in which it occurs in  $A$  in mode  $m$ .”<sup>315</sup>

Thus, when we substitute, within a logically possible complex, an entity which appears there in a given mode with another entity with the same mode (same possibility of appearance), we will again obtain a logically possible complex.

Drawing on this general theory of complexes, a certain entity (e.g. a relation) can occur in a judgment complex (as term) in a way in which it cannot occur in the putative corresponding complex (where it would have to be relating). When the entity occurs in this way, which goes against its logical nature, in the judgment complex, the judgment is nonsensical. Since Russell’s general theory of complexes allows this occurrence, it cannot prevent the occurrence of these nonsensical judgements. This, in turn, results from the relation within a judgment complex being treated as non-relational. When relation is treated as non-relational, its mode of appearance within the complex is not distinguishable from that of other terms (e.g.  $a$  and  $b$  in  $aRb$ ). Thus, a relation can be substituted within that complex by any other term and it is possible, in consequence, to carry out a nonsensical judgement, e.g. replace “love” by “Sheldon” in the judgment complex “S (subject) judges that Penny loves Leonard” and end up with the nonsense judgement that “Penny Sheldons Leonard”.

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313 “A ‘complex’ is anything analyzable, anything which has *constituents*” (Russell, 1913, p. 79, emphasis in the original).

314 Johnston, 2012, pp. 16-17. Russell himself does not use this terminology (“logical type” and “logical possibility”) in the *Theory of Knowledge*.

315 Johnston, 2012, p. 19.

The essential lesson Wittgenstein gave Russell thus lies, according to Johnston, in reminding him that if he faithfully adheres to his own principle of substitutability, he is forced to accept the possibility of nonsensical judgements.<sup>316</sup> It may indeed seem that Russell forgot his own adherence to this principle since he “spends considerable effort in his 1913 work *Theory of Knowledge* theorizing about complexes in ways which contravene precisely this [...] version of (S) [principle of substitutability]”.<sup>317</sup> Johnston here directs our attention to Russell’s discussion concerning non-symmetrical permutative complexes and his attempt to get rid of their ambiguity. These complexes are those in which there is more than one way their constituents may be arranged – the classic examples are “\_ is bigger than \_”, “\_ is on the left of \_” etc. In those cases, two complexes may arise – *a* is bigger than *b* or *b* is bigger than *a*; *a* is on the left of *b* or *b* is on the left of *a*.

What Russell attempts to do in the *Theory of Knowledge* is analyse this ambiguity away by introducing the molecular complexes in which each term is in possession of a determined position (e.g. the complex “*a* is bigger than *b*” is to be analysed into “there is a complex in which *a* is bigger and *b* is smaller”). By doing this, however, Russell’s proposed remedy addresses only a narrow kind of ambiguity (the direction problem), and neglects altogether other rearrangements that principle of substitutability allows (the unity problem). Moreover, already the attempt to prevent the problem of direction, however, goes against Russell’s own principle of substitutability.

While Russell was persuaded, in 1913, “that he had the right to disallow certain substitutions that (S) [principle of substitutability] would allow”, i.e. to “disallow certain unwelcome looking substitutions in his multiple relation judgement complexes”,<sup>318</sup> Wittgenstein’s objection resides, according to Johnston, in pressing upon Russell his own commitment to the principle in question. As evidence for his interpretation, Johnston reminds us of the fact that in 1918, when Russell returned to his work on the theory of judgement (in his lectures *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*), he engaged only in the considerations which were in line with the principle of substitutability, i.e. he did not introduce *ad hoc* arrangements which would help him to exclude unwelcome substitutions.<sup>319</sup> Thus, the attempted analysis of non-

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316 Ibid., pp. 21, 24.

317 Ibid., p. 21.

318 Ibid., p. 22.

319 Ibid., pp. 22-23; Russell, B. (1972). *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*. Reprinted in 2010, London: Routledge.

symmetrical permutative complexes is missing and after Russell's shelving the *Theory of Knowledge* manuscript in 1913 was, in fact, never attempted again. Johnston's eventual conclusion is that Wittgenstein's claim about the possibility of nonsensical judgements within Russell's adherence to the principle of substitutability can be understood as a "demonstration" of the inability of Russell's multiple relation theory to account for the synthesis in thought".<sup>320</sup> What does this objection amount to?

By introducing the notion of a "form" in the *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell endeavoured to explicate the possibility of a subject's unifying terms within a judgement even where it happens that the judgement is false, i.e. that the terms are actually (in the world) *not* related in the way judgement unites them. To combine terms in thought amounts for Russell to having them together with the form, i.e. with their mode of combination. This account, Johnston contends, is offered by Russell as an explanation of the synthesis in thought, i.e. of the fact that terms are mutually combined in the mind to form a unity and thus may represent the terms they are about as being combined in the same way.<sup>321</sup> The point of Wittgenstein's objection then lies, according to Johnston, basically in arguing that synthesis in thought may amount to something quite different than the terms' being related, within a judgment, to the form:

"We might worry here that simply including the way things are represented [i.e. a form] as standing amongst the constituents of a judgement does not obviously do the required work – it is not obvious how this explains the fact that the judgement represents things as standing together in the included way. *A thought's synthesizing certain things might seem rather different from its containing both those things and a mode of synthesis.*"<sup>322</sup>

Wittgenstein's famous objection concerning the possibility of judging nonsense is therefore for Johnston the reformulation of his view that Russell's account of judgement is not capable of explaining the synthesis of terms in thought. If so, however, it still remains to ask what a more accurate explanation of this "synthesis in thought" might be.

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320 Johnston, 2012, p. 31.

321 Ibid., p. 25ff.

322 Ibid., p. 28; emphasis mine.

### (c) Pincock – Correspondence

The last interpretation I would like to discuss in more detail is that offered by Christopher Pincock.<sup>323</sup> Pincock argues that while almost all interpreters of the Russell-Wittgenstein dispute over the nature of judgement suppose that it eventually concerns either the unity- or the direction-problem, there is actually another difficulty which is *the only one* to explain Russell's abandonment of the multiple relation theory: the problem of correspondence between the judgement complex and the complex in the world which is judged ("corresponding complex"). In this claim, Pincock's interpretation is indeed unique – I do not know of any other commentator who would so straightforwardly claim that neither the unity- nor direction-problem plays any role whatsoever in Wittgenstein's criticism while the problem of correspondence is crucial. Let us look therefore at how Pincock's unusual interpretation unfolds.

Pincock, like Johnston, claims that Russell's theory of judgement rests upon his general theory of complexes. However, while their interpretations in this respect converge, the authors eventually disagree over what the theory of complexes as applied to the theory of judgement actually obliges Russell to adhere to. For Pincock, the vital part of the theory of complexes – which will be then related to the problem of correspondence – is "a distinction between descriptions that pick out a logically possible complex and those which fail to do this".<sup>324</sup> Russell's intention is that a judgement complex will be logically possible just in case there is a logically possible corresponding complex whose existence it would assert. (But it is an open question whether his theory delivers this result.)<sup>325</sup>

The distinction between logically possible and impossible complexes is sufficient,

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323 Pincock, C. (2008). Russell's Last (And Best) Multiple-Relation Theory of Judgement. *Mind*, 117(465), pp. 107-139.

324 Ibid., p. 114.

325 As Pincock notes (Ibid.), Russell defines what "logically possible" complex is only very late in the *Theory of Knowledge* manuscript when he claims that complex is logically possible if there is a proposition which has the same verbal form (Russell, 2013, p. 111). And, as Pincock adds (Ibid.), it cannot be Russell's last word since it is the notion of a proposition which is to be explained: "When we were discussing relations, we said that, with a given relation and given terms, two complexes are 'logically possible'. But the notion of what is 'logically possible' is not an ultimate one, and must be reduced to something that is *actual* before our analysis can be complete. Now although we do not yet know what a proposition is, it is obvious that what we had in mind, when we said that a complex was 'logically possible', may be expressed by saying that there is a proposition having the same verbal form" (Russell, 2013, p. 111; emphasis in the original). Precisely because the notion of what is logically possible needs to be reduced to something actual, it eventually needs to be defined based on the correspondence of a judgement complex with the worldly complex.

according to Pincock, to elucidate why Russell didn't need to be worried about the problem for whose discovery Wittgenstein is generally credited, i.e. about the possibility of judging nonsense. The reason for this is that the theory of logically possible complexes already makes apparent the impossibility of nonsensical judgement precisely because nonsensically arranged complexes are not logically possible. A judging subject thus cannot judge, for instance, that "Cassio desdemonas love" since "such understandings are ruled out because there is no logically possible complex with [this] form".<sup>326</sup> Pincock is therefore convinced that Russell can solve the unity problem merely by relying on his general theory of complexes.

However, Pincock admits, even if the unity problem is rendered irrelevant, there is still the need to tackle the narrow-direction problem, i.e. the question of how to distinguish the judgement that "*a* loves *b*" and that "*b* loves *a*". As we have seen, the complexes which are liable to this complication are called, in the *Theory of Knowledge*, non-symmetrical permutative.<sup>327</sup> Russell proposes, in order to rule out the unwelcome substitutions, to analyse these initially atomic complexes into more complicated, molecular complexes in which the notion of a *position* of terms within a complex comes to the fore. To be specific, we can analyse the atomic complex "*a* loves *b*" into the molecular complex "there is a complex in which *a* loves *b* and *b* is loved by *a*". Or, to make use of the example Russell himself offers on this occasion, the complex "*a* is before *b*" must be interpreted as meaning "there is a complex in which *a* is earlier and *b* is later".<sup>328</sup>

This solution seemed unsatisfactory, however, even to Russell – for one thing, he never finished the part of the *Theory of Knowledge* concerning the theory of molecular complexes and it therefore remains unanswered how one should further account for the constitution of those complexes. It may be that they would need to contain some "molecular" logical forms in order to be properly united. Based on the uncertainty concerning the precise constitution of permutative non-symmetrical complexes, there arises in their case a problem with the correspondence (of these complexes with their referents). This difficulty resides in a lack of clarity concerning what properties the judgement complex must have in order for the judgement to be true. In the case of permutative non-symmetrical complexes, Pincock holds, Russell did not successfully show that for each logically possible judgement complex, there is "a complex

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326 Pincock, 2008, p. 119.

327 For the distinction between non-permutative, permutative symmetrical and permutative non-symmetrical complexes see footnote 300.

328 Russell, 2013, p. 145ff.

whose existence is necessary and sufficient for [this (judgemental) complex's] truth".<sup>329</sup>

This, in turn, is because "the ultimate constituents of the belief complex cannot be univocally mapped to a logically possible complex"<sup>330</sup>. Let's demonstrate this on one specific example: in the judgement complex "*a* loves *b*", its ultimate constituents are not only *a*, *love* and *b*, but also those constituents which describe the existential quantification and conjunction contained in the complex "*there is a complex in which a loves b and a is loved by b*". If, however, we have after analysis these disunified elements (*a*, *love*, *b* and expressions for existential quantification and conjunction), the analysis *still* leaves us with two logically possible complexes: "*a* loves *b*" or "*b* loves *a*". The only option to sidestep the ambiguity would be to retain, after analysis of the complex, the whole propositions "*a* loves *b*" and "*b* is loved by *a*". However, this would amount to the danger of reintroducing false propositions since the judgement may also be false.<sup>331</sup> But this would contradict the core idea of the multiple relation theory. As a result of this problem the correspondence between a judgement complex and its referent remains an unresolved mystery in the *Theory of Knowledge*.

To back up this interpretation and to make it compatible with the influence on Russell of Wittgenstein's criticism, Pincock interprets Wittgenstein's objection as also being concerned with truth and correspondence and not with the unity problem.<sup>332</sup> The actual point on which Wittgenstein puts the strongest emphasis is according to Pincock the judgement's necessity of its always being either true or false. This is allegedly expressed by Wittgenstein's claim that "from the proposition 'A judges that (say) *a* is in a relation *R* to *b*', if correctly analysed, the proposition ' $aRb \vee \sim aRb$ ' must follow directly *without the use of any other premiss*'"<sup>333</sup>, i.e. from "A judges that *aRb*", it must directly follow that *aRb* is a meaningful proposition which is either true or false.<sup>334</sup> However, this is not guaranteed by Russell's theory owing to the above-

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329 Pincock, 2007, p. 125.

330 Pincock uses here the notion "belief complex" for what I call "judgement complex". They do not differ in any important respects. In the *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell also uses both terms interchangeably, he only mentions that, according to him, the word "belief" is more fitting since "it has much more definitely the suggestion of a particular dated event which may be studied empirically by psychology" (Russell, 2013, p. 136). However, I prefer the notion "judgement complex" precisely because it is more indicative of the fact that Russell's discussion is part of the broader philosophical context of disputes concerning the nature of judgment.

331 Pincock, 2008, p. 123.

332 Ibid., p. 130.

333 Russell's letter to Morrell, 19 June 1913. In Griffin, 2002, p. 448; emphasis in the original.

334 The interpretation according to which the proposition ' $aRb \vee \sim aRb$ ' is the expression of the meaningfulness of a proposition (and therefore of its being either true or false) is present in the *Principia Mathematica* (Whitehead, A. N. and Russell, B. (1910). *Principia Mathematica I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in 1997, *Principia Mathematica to \*56*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 129); see also Potter, 2008, p. 127 and Johnston, 2012, p. 30.

discussed difficulties with the correspondence relation in permutative non-symmetrical complexes. In the following subsection, I will analyse all three interpretations presented here and attempt to provide, based on this discussion, my own evaluation of Wittgenstein's objection.

## 4.2 What Was the Objection Then?

The commentaries examined above all share the belief that the main point underlying the Russell-Wittgenstein debate is more basic than both the problem of direction (the narrow direction problem) and the problem of unity (the wide direction problem). For Hanks, the major topic is the contention that a Russellian judgement complex is incapable of asserting that something is true or false. Johnston identifies as the core of the dispute Wittgenstein's insistence that Russell did not successfully describe the synthesis of the elements in thought. And Pincock supposes that even though the unity problem can be successfully addressed, there remains a further unresolved complication, namely the nature of correspondence relation between the judgement complex and the worldly complex whose existence the judgement asserts.

According to Hanks, the judgement complexes described in Russell's multiple relation theory cannot serve as bearers of truth or falsity because their elements are merely associated. If this is the case, Russell is not in a position to account for judgement's ability to assert something about its referent, i.e. about the complex the judgement is directed toward. Hanks draws our attention to Wittgenstein's claim in *Notes on Logic* that in stating that someone judges something, we need to mention a whole proposition, not merely its elements.<sup>335</sup> The emphasis put on the meaningfulness of the judgment, which must be formulated in the form of a whole proposition, suggests that Wittgenstein reacts to a theory in which what is judged is not accounted for as a whole proposition, but rather as "only its constituents". And it is not hard to guess that the theory discussed is Russell's multiple relation theory.

However, I don't think that Russell's theory is susceptible to Hanks' objection. True, it may be that a conception of judgement as an act in which judgemental relation takes several terms and assembles them together may seem in danger of propounding that what we judge amount merely to several disunified elements. But even if we are in doubt as to whether these elements are assembled so that they constitute a unity which can be true or false, it remains

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335 Wittgenstein, *NL*, C29, 30.



certain that they are assembled by judgemental relation to create, together with a judging subject, the judgment complex. There is some truth in Hanks' diagnosis that there is a difficulty with judgement's truth or falsity, but it does not reside in the absent unification of the judgement complex. Rather, the question to be posed is whether the judgmental unity has a power to represent something external to the judgement and whether, therefore, truth or falsity may be ascribed to judgment. This query concerning the representational capacities of judgement may be construed, I believe, as the topic lying behind both Johnston's and Pincock's interpretations.

These interpretations differ in their eventual diagnosis of the crucial point of Wittgenstein's objection, but they are similar in their emphasizing that Russell's theory of judgement rests upon his general theory of complexes. In Johnston's description, Wittgenstein is reminding Russell to be faithful to his own principle of substitutability, which has the adverse effect of allowing the formation of nonsensical judgements. On my understanding, Johnston's interpretation may still be rendered as focusing particularly on the unity problem, i.e. the fact that elements within a judgemental complex may be arranged in a nonsensical way. However, Johnston's rendering of the objection suggests Wittgenstein intended to allude to yet another issue, namely synthesis in thought. The synthesis-in-thought topic, transcending the unity problem, supposedly represents the core of Wittgenstein's objection. As Johnston claims, "[o]ur story finds Wittgenstein presenting his nonsense judgement objection to Russell precisely as the objection that Russell's *Theory of Knowledge* version of his theory of judgement still does not account for the synthesis in thought".<sup>336</sup>

If so, we need to understand exactly why, according to Johnston, Russell's theory is unable to give an account of synthesis in thought and, for that matter, what this synthesis is supposed to achieve. From Johnston's rendering, the synthesis does not amount to our judgemental complex having, besides their constituents, the added component of a form: "We might worry here that simply including the way things are represented [e.g. a form] as standing amongst the constituents of a judgement does not obviously do the required work".<sup>337</sup> "The required work" then, the aim of the synthesis in thought, is to make comprehensible the fact that judgement represents things as combined in the way it asserts them to be combined.<sup>338</sup>

Thus, the central objective of judgement is to represent things as being combined in a

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336 Johnston, 2012, p. 31.

337 Ibid., p. 28.

338 Ibid.

certain way. For instance, if I unify within my judgement the constituents to make a judgement that “*a* loves *b*”, the proper task of this judgement is to present the things in the world as being so combined. However, Johnston believes that this representation would not be realized if judgement merely amounted to putting together judgemental constituents and the additional form. While Johnston puts a great emphasis on the unresolved issue of the synthesis in thought, though, the question remaining unanswered throughout his article seems to be *why exactly* judgement, in this rendering, is incapable of representing things in the required way.

In the first part of his article, Johnston illuminates how Wittgenstein confronted Russell with the impossibility of going against his own principle of substitutability and, consequently, with the inability of his multiple relation theory to rule out the formation of nonsensical judgements.<sup>339</sup> This is equivalent to the unity problem. However, from Johnston’s discussion of synthesis in thought, it seems that even if the unity of the terms within judgmental complex is guaranteed, judgement may not be able to represent things as being combined. Where does the additional difficulty reside?

One way to answer this question is to employ Pincock’s ideas. He is emphatic that the unity problem does not present a critical obstacle for Russell’s theory given that nonsensical judgements may be avoided thanks to the notion of the “logically possible complex”. Be that as it may, Pincock’s description of the decisive and fatal objection to Russell’s theory is of importance now: he locates it, as we have seen, in the fact that for permutative non-symmetrical complexes, Russell’s account of the make-up of the judgement complex does not suffice to determine unambiguously the condition for its truth.

I believe there is some truth in Pincock’s account, particularly in his contention that the major obstacle for Russell’s theory resides in its inability to properly account for the correspondence relation (between the judgement complex and the worldly complex). But I am persuaded, contra Pincock, that this difficulty is more general: it is not merely the case of non-symmetrical permutative complexes where the correspondence relation is not convincingly accounted for. Rather, I suggest, Wittgenstein’s point is to the effect that *no* judgment, on Russell’s theory, has intrinsically a determinate condition for its truth. The essential question then is as to why it is so. I believe, contra Pincock, that it is not due to the unresolved issue of a correspondence relation (merely) in the case of non-symmetrical permutative complexes, but

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339 Ibid., pp. 15-24.

due the lack of explanation, in the case of *any* judgement complex at all, of the nature of a correspondence relation of a judgment to its referent. This, in turn, is due to the fact that Russell did not clarify, within his multiple relation theory, the specificity of judgment which resides in his representational character, i.e. he did not explain how any judgment is capable to relate to something other than itself.

Russell was apparently persuaded that to account for the fact that judgement has an intentional character (i.e. that it is related to a referent external to it), it suffices that objects contained within the judgemental complex are the *same* as the objects to which judgement relates. However, this account does not provide a sufficient explanation – it rather conceals the problem. The fact that judgement is intentional cannot be given merely by containing the same elements as its referent. By merely describing judgement complex as being composed of objects, Russell does not provide us with an answer of how the judgement actually says that such a complex exists.

I suspect that this omission is a consequence of the fact that Russell's complexes are not designed to explain the intentional character of judgement. Russell's theory of complexes (as both Johnston and Pincock also emphasize) is a general theory, i.e. a theory about any complexes whatsoever, and not only – or even primarily – *judgement complexes*. What Russell did in building up his theory of judgement is take his ontological theory of complexes and use it as a foundation for an epistemological theory about the nature of judgement. In other words, he embarks on the elaboration of a judgement theory with the ontological account of complexes situated at its heart. The main difficulty, then, seems to me to reside in Russell's inability to explain why judgement complexes have a special status (i.e. are intentional) among all other complexes. It is not explicated how they succeeded in having such an important property. And it may be suspected that it is not explicable if an attempt is made to resolve this issue within the ontological theory (of complexes).

Interpreted this way, the fundamental message Wittgenstein wished to convey to Russell was this: your multiple relation theory, in whatever form, necessarily misses its target because you took your general theory of complexes in an attempt to explain the nature of judgement. But in doing this, you fell prey to an elementary misunderstanding: the representational nature of judgment cannot be explained with the ontological theory of complexes in its centre. It must be approached with an appropriate theory designed for explaining an intentional entity.

Wittgenstein's objection, as generally summarized, is that we "cannot judge nonsense". How does this formulation fit into my interpretation? A judgement is nonsensical if it does not meet the essential requirement that a judgement makes an assertion about the way things are in the world. From this point of view, however, *all* judgements described by Russell are in danger of being nonsensical since Russell did not provide us with an explanation of judgment's ability to represent complexes external to it. However, the extra step needed to prevent a theory of judgement from suffering this defect is not to come up with additional restrictions which disallow certain "suspicious" combinations of judgemental elements. Instead, one must deliver a theory which takes the intentional character of judgement into account from the very beginning. And this, I believe, is exactly what Wittgenstein took pains to offer in his own gradually evolving theory of judgement, which will be the topic of the next chapter.

## 5. Wittgenstein's Theory of Propositions and Judgements

In the previous chapter, I proposed that the core of Wittgenstein's objection to Russell's multiple relation theory of judgement was that it could not account for the representational character of judgement, given that it was founded on the ontological theory of complexes. This non-epistemological grounding meant that Russell was not in a position to explain how judgement complexes, in contrast to all other complexes, are able to represent things other than themselves. My goal in this chapter will be to explain how Wittgenstein attempted, firstly in the *Notes on Logic*, and then, most importantly, in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, a theory of judgement which had the issue of representability at its centre.

In the first section of this chapter (5.1), I will outline both the core of Wittgenstein's tentative account of propositions and judgements in the *Notes on Logic* and the reasons for his eventual abandonment of this conception. I will emphasize that Wittgenstein strived to account for the complexity and intentional character of judgement, though he ceased to believe that the theory sketched in the *Notes* accounted for them adequately. After summarizing Wittgenstein's dissatisfaction with the *Notes*, I will move on to the main topic of the chapter, namely the account of propositions as facts with representational capacities provided in the *Tractatus*. Initially, in 5.2, I will pay attention to Wittgenstein's elegant notion of a proposition as a picture which may be considered a fact which represents another fact. Based on that, I will elucidate how Wittgenstein's conception of the ascriptions of judgement serves as a further way to emphasize the specific nature of the proposition as a representing fact. And finally, in 5.3 and 5.4, I will turn my attention back to the overall topic of the thesis, namely to the Kantian influence on the discussed theories of judgement, and will investigate whether there is a specifically Kantian influence present in the *Tractatus*.

### 5.1 Proposition and Judgement in the *Notes on Logic*

Wittgenstein's remarks called *Notes on Logic* are chronologically the first surviving text from the young Wittgenstein, from which we may gather information both about Wittgenstein's early philosophical ideas in general and about his reaction to Russell's theory of judgement in

particular.<sup>340</sup> Although Wittgenstein eventually abandoned many of the suggestions made in the *Notes*, he developed in that work a tentative account of propositions and judgments that may be considered his first criticism of Russell's multiple relation theory. He introduced there his important principle that the proper epistemological account of judgement must be grounded in the appropriate theory of propositions: "the epistemological questions concerning the nature of judgement and belief cannot be solved without a correct apprehension of the form of the proposition".<sup>341</sup> Thus, to come to terms with Russell's multiple relation theory and its supposed inability to account for the intentional nature of judgment, it seemed necessary to Wittgenstein to firstly properly elaborate the notion of a proposition.

Wittgenstein's guiding thought was in some ways a recovery of a central theme in Russell's early (dyadic) theory, according to which we are, when we judge, related to the whole proposition, namely that a proposition must be in possession of a complexity based on which it may represent a complex in the world. It seems that it is exactly this issue of complexity which Wittgenstein had in mind when he contrasted a proposition and a name. He emphasized that a proposition, even if it may seem simple (due to its being symbolized as "*p*"), cannot be compared with a proper name, since the way each represents is essentially different.<sup>342</sup> While a name signifies its referent merely by indicating or standing in for it, a proposition has two ways in which it can relate to what it represents: it can be either true or false.<sup>343</sup> Wittgenstein attempts to explicate this twofold way of propositional representing by describing propositions as *bipolar*. To emphasize this bipolarity, he writes a proposition *p* with two poles on its sides: *a-p-b*. This denotes that a proposition has – or rather is related to – a true-pole and a false-pole, designated respectively by the letters *a* and *b*. The bipolarity entails that "each one of these propositions can only be true or false, not both".<sup>344</sup>

To further explicate propositional bipolarity, Wittgenstein uses a metaphor of an arrow.<sup>345</sup> While a name may be pictured as a point, a proposition's capacity to represent either truly or falsely may be imagined as a proposition's and its referent pointing (as arrows) to one

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340 As Michael Potter suggests (2008, p. 1), *Notes on Logic* provide the summary of Wittgenstein's philosophical views from the period from 1911 (when Wittgenstein arrived at Cambridge to study under Russell) to his departure to Norway in 1913.

341 Wittgenstein, *NL*, B55.

342 Ibid.

343 Ibid., B23, C37.

344 Ibid., B48.

345 Ibid., B23, C37.

or the other direction. If both propositions and their referents are identified with arrows, it follows that they may point in the same or opposite directions.<sup>346</sup> Within this picture, a proposition may be claimed to be a “standard to which facts behave”<sup>347</sup> – if the fact points in the same direction, it is of the same sense as a proposition; if it points in opposite direction, it is of the opposite sense. In the first case, a proposition is true, in the second, false.

We may understand that Wittgenstein wished to emphasize, by writing a proposition with *a* and *b* on its sides, that it must be either true or false. But it still may seem surprising why he opted for such a non-traditional way of symbolizing this. One explanation of why he might have insisted on his *ab*-notation is offered by Michael Potter.<sup>348</sup> He suggests it may lie in the fact that Wittgenstein wished to assure that truth and falsity of a proposition will not be “reified”, i.e. considered as particular “logical objects”, as might occur if they were labelled as *T* and *F*.<sup>349</sup>

But there may be even more to this special *ab*-notation, namely a connection with the above-emphasized notion of propositional complexity. One thing that is particularly striking about Wittgenstein’s *ab*-notation is its resemblance to Russell’s often-used example of a relational proposition – “*aRb*”. It is as if Wittgenstein just replaced “*R*” with “*p*”, arriving at “*a-p-b*”. Of course, both expressions convey different meanings – Russell’s “*aRb*” depicts that a proposition consists of terms *a*, *b* and a relation *R*, while Wittgenstein’s “*a-p-b*” does not specify any particular internal complexity in the proposition ‘*p*’, but instead emphasizes the proposition’s being related to its true- and false-pole. Still, it is tempting to guess that Wittgenstein wished to accentuate precisely the fact about propositions that Russell stressed when writing “*aRb*”, namely that propositions are composite, consisting of several elements assembled in a particular way, since it is precisely due to this complexity that proposition may be capable of being true or false (in opposition to a mere name which points to an object). Before examining why Wittgenstein eventually abandoned this attempt to account for

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346 As Hanks notes, Wittgenstein must have worked only with the picture of arrows running parallel to one another, see Hanks, P. W. (2012). Early Wittgenstein on Judgement. In: J. Zalabardo, ed., *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 37-63, p. 42.

347 Wittgenstein, *NL*, C37.

348 Potter, 2008, pp. 173-174.

349 Ibid., p. 174. If this interpretation is correct, the preference for *ab*-notation would represent a special case of Wittgenstein’s overall persuasion that logic does not deal with any special entities, logical objects. Potter notes (2008, p. 174) that this may be the reason why Wittgenstein, in the *Notes dictated to Moore*, put emphasis on “*a*” and “*b*” not being *names* for the poles, describing them instead as “scratches” (Ibid.); see Wittgenstein, L. (1914). *Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore in Norway*. In: G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, eds. (1984). *Notebooks 1914-1916*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 108-118, p. 114.



propositional complexity, let's remain a moment longer with the *Notes on Logic* conception, to see how Wittgenstein used the notion of a bipolar proposition as the basis for his (at least schematic) theory of judgement.

The central difficulty here is accounting for a judging subject's relation to the proposition with its two poles. To tackle this issue, Wittgenstein comes up with a picture that is intended to symbolize the relation of a subject *A* to a proposition *p* and its two poles.<sup>350</sup> He says that “*A* believes *p*” is most correctly expressed by using the *ab*-notation, i.e. “by making ‘*A*’ have a relation to the poles ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’ of *a-p-b*”:

“[...] we shall only be able to express the proposition ‘*A* believes *p*’ correctly by the *ab*-notation; say by making ‘*A*’ have a relation to the poles ‘*a*’ and ‘*b*’ of *a-p-b*.”<sup>351</sup>



And to the same topic, he adds that:

“The proposition ‘*a* judges *p*’ consists of the proper name *a*, the proposition *p* with its 2 poles, and *a* being related to both of these poles in a certain way. This is obviously not a relation in the ordinary sense.”<sup>352</sup>

In a nontrivial sense, this theory of judgement performs the role Wittgenstein assigned to it, i.e. it is merely an application of his above-presented analysis of the proposition (as bipolar) to the analysis of judgement. What we judge is a bipolar proposition *a-p-b*. When we employ again the suggested comparison with Russell’s “*aRb*”, we may see that what Wittgenstein’s proposal here might be understood as preserving a central thought from the multiple relation theory: when someone judges, he has to have some relation to the several components of a complex, and not merely a simple (dyadic) relation to a single (complex) object. Since Wittgenstein did not, in fact, write “*aRb*”, but “*a-p-b*”, he did not end up considering whether a judging person relates singularly to each element of the complex. His substitution of the mysterious “poles” *a* and *b* in *a-p-b* for the related terms *a* and *b* in Russell’s *aRb* effectively insulated him from that question.

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350 Wittgenstein, *NL*, B55.

351 Ibid., C41.

352 Ibid.

In Wittgenstein's conception,  $A$ 's judging a proposition  $p$  means that the judging subject is related to both proposition's poles "in a certain way".<sup>353</sup> Wittgenstein emphasizes that this relation of the subject to the two poles of the proposition "[i]s obviously not a relation in the ordinary sense".<sup>354</sup> It is indeed not. But to know what it is *not* is hardly to have a theory of the special kind of relation it is: how, we may ask, is a judging subject related to both true and false pole of a proposition? This issue is, unfortunately, never explicitly tackled in the *Notes on Logic*.

It is well known that Wittgenstein eventually abandoned the theory of propositions and judgements presented in the *Notes on Logic*. As Hanks observes, the first indication of the shift from the account of judgement presented in the *Notes* to the one presented in the *Tractatus* appeared in the final remarks in the *Notes dictated to Moore* in Norway from 1914.<sup>355</sup> Here, we see in effect the first mention of a claim which later brought Wittgenstein fame in the *Tractatus*:

"The relation of 'I believe  $p$ ' to ' $p$ ' can be compared to the relation ' $p$ ' says ' $p$ ' to  $p$ : it is just as impossible that  $I$  should be a simple as that ' $p$ ' should be."<sup>356</sup>

Even though I will leave the more detailed exegesis of the famous *Tractarian* counterpart of this claim for later,<sup>357</sup> it may be noted here at least that Wittgenstein obviously paid attention to the issue of complexity here: under the presupposition that the relation of 'I believe  $p$ ' to ' $p$ ' resembles that of ' $p$ ' says ' $p$ ' to  $p$ , neither " $I$ " nor the proposition (' $p$ ') can be simple. There probably have been several reasons why Wittgenstein abandoned the theory sketchily elaborated in his *Notes on Logic* and set out to search for a new conception.<sup>358</sup> However, it seems to me persuasive to believe that the crucial reason did not reside in the unclear nature of the subject's relation to a proposition, but rather Wittgenstein's more general persuasion that his sketched theory was not fitted for providing an adequate account of propositional complexity. Peter Hanks pinpoints a similar motivation, claiming that what Wittgenstein found faulty about his theory was that "the representation of facts requires logical complexity. Something simple and non-composite does not have the capacity for presenting a

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353 Ibid.

354 Ibid.

355 Hanks, 2012, p. 49.

356 Wittgenstein, L. (1914). Notes Dictated to G. E. Moore in Norway. In: G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, eds. (1984). *Notebooks 1914-1916*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 108-118., p. 118.

357 For the analysis of this claim from 5.542 of the *Tractatus* see section 5.2.2 of the thesis.

358 More detailed account with several suggestions regarding Wittgenstein's reasons for abandoning the theory is presented in Hanks, 2012, pp. 50-57.

standard to which the facts behave”.<sup>359</sup>

The problem is not that the theory in the *Notes on Logic* did not pay attention to the propositional complexity at all: on the contrary, it attempted to underscore it precisely by presenting the proposition with its *a*- and *b*-poles, indicating thereby that a proposition, in contrast to a name, is a complex entity which may have two different relations to reality (either corresponding or not corresponding with it). However, Wittgenstein might have been persuaded that even if the notion of complexity is tackled, his theory of propositional bipolarity does not come much closer than Russell’s multiple relation theory (which clearly inspired it) to shedding some light on the central mystery of the proposition’s intentional, representational character. And it is exactly this character which may be claimed to be more successfully accounted for within the *Tractarian* conception of propositions as pictures. Let us therefore move on to Wittgenstein’s picture theory to see how Wittgenstein attempted to account both for proposition’s complexity and its representational character.

## 5.2 A Picture Theory

It seems a mere platitude to say that the central topic of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is the so-called “picture theory” from which Wittgenstein, later in the book, derives several consequences (about the notions of judgements, causality, the nature of logic and mathematics etc.). However, as Michael Potter notes, each commentator may conceive of the so-called picture theory quite differently – some “use the phrase very broadly as a sort of catch-all for the logical doctrines of the book”, while “others much more narrowly for the specific proposal that propositions are pictures of reality”.<sup>360</sup> For my part, I will initially begin, in line with the narrower approach, with the explication of which bearing the notion of a picture (in general and as applied to a proposition) has as related to our representation of reality. And based on that, I will broaden my account by illuminating how the notion of the proposition as a picture is applied in the theory of judgement-ascriptions and how we may, based on it, decide whether there are some similarities in the *Tractatus* to Kantian epistemology.

Since we attempt to answer, by means of a picture theory, the question of how a proposition as a picture can represent reality, we may presume this theory should consist of two

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359 Hanks 2012, p. 50 We may read this consideration as a foreshadow of the *Tractarian* claim that judgement ascriptions amount to the correlations of two facts, not to the ascriptions of judgment to judging subject.

360 Potter, 2008, p. 224.

“layers” – one account of what *represents* (a proposition) and another of what *is represented* (reality).<sup>361</sup> On this basis, we will expect the theory to include an account of representation and some kind of ontology describing that to which a proposition as a representation refers. To some extent, this expectation is indeed fulfilled in the *Tractatus*: Wittgenstein opens it with very general considerations concerning the nature of that which is pictured: a reality, which he claims is composed of facts (1.1). Immediately afterwards (in 2.1ff), he moves on to elucidating the nature of pictures in general and then (from 3 onward) of propositions and thoughts as pictures.

But a caveat is necessary: the image that Wittgenstein unfolds in the *Tractatus* is *not* that of two independent realms one of which (reality) is represented by the other (propositions as pictures). Rather, reality and its representation are conceived of as two realizations of one phenomenon: *reality as represented by us*. From the beginning (1.1ff), the *Tractatus* claims that reality is not composed of things, but facts. We may wonder what reason Wittgenstein had for this particular description of the world – and one way to shed some light on it would be to emphasize that being composed of facts is the feature of reality salient for its representation in language. In other words, our speaking about reality is carried out by our claims that (it is a fact that) something is so and so. When we subsequently encounter Wittgenstein’s *Tractarian* ontology and the picture theory, we may notice that the one is always developed with respect to the other: description of the world is offered in order to manifest features describable by language and language, in turn, is always construed as a tool for providing an adequate description of reality.

### 5.2.1 The Notion of a Picture

As said above, the picture theory describes both the picture and the pictured (reality) only in so far as the features essential for this representation are concerned (in both picture and the pictured). In the case of represented reality, it is the notion of facts (*Tatsachen*) from which the world is said to be composed (1.1). After the introduction of facts, the notion of a state of affairs (*Sachverhalt*) is brought in: the fact is defined on its basis as the existence of states of affairs (*das Bestehen von Sachverhalten*) (2). When Wittgenstein wishes to talk about more complex combination of states of affairs without deciding on its existence or non-existence, he employs not the notion of a fact (existing states of affairs), but a “situation” (*Sachlage*).

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<sup>361</sup> Since Wittgenstein did not conceive of a proposition as including the objects about which it is judged, as Russell did in the case of a judgement.

Only after introducing the notions of facts and states of affairs does Wittgenstein offer the notion of an object (*Gegenstand*). Objects are elements from which states of affairs are composed – a state of affairs is a combination (2.01) or configuration (2.0272) of objects. Objects in the state of affairs “stand in a determinate relation to one another” (2.031). Or, in other words, they are connected such that “they fit into one another like the links of the chain” (2.03). On this view, there is no relation distinct from objects themselves which “glues” objects into a state of affairs.<sup>362</sup> Rather the objects are mutually related without the need of any “glue” – in this sense, we can imagine them as the links of the chain which hold together without any additional help. The way in which objects are combined in a state of affairs is the structure of this state of affairs (2.032), while the possibility of this structure is its form (2.033).

In section 2.1, Wittgenstein moves from this outline of an ontology to the theory of the picture as something which is capable of representing a situation (an existence or nonexistence of states of affairs: “A picture presents a situation in logical space, the existence and non-existence of states of affairs” (2.11). Firstly, he introduces the theory as a theory of pictures, without further qualification (2.1ff). Later, he identifies the proposition (4.01) and the thought (3) with the picture, and it therefore becomes obvious that his picture theory is designed to serve as a theory of how propositions and thoughts represent situations actually occurring or those which may occur in the world. The notion of a “picture” (*ein Bild*) made its first appearance in the *Notebooks*, where Wittgenstein referred to it initially as a “logical portrayal” (*ein logisches Abbild*) of a situation.<sup>363</sup> At several places, he described a picture as a “model” (*Modell*) of a situation.<sup>364</sup> Here, I agree with Michael Morris’ suggestion that the notion of a picture might be misleading while the notion of a “model” represents for an English reader more fittingly what Wittgenstein had in mind.<sup>365</sup> This is, I presume, because we usually take a picture to be compact and indivisible (we imagine a picture as a drawing hanging immutably on the wall). However, this is the exact opposite of Wittgenstein’s conception – for Wittgenstein, a picture or model is supposed to be an experimental composition of elements which represents – correctly or incorrectly – the elements (objects) which compose the situation to which the picture is related.

In the *Tractatus*, the notion of a picture emerges immediately after the opening ontology

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362 Thus, it seems that Wittgenstein needed to count relations amongst objects as well.

363 Wittgenstein, L. (1914-1916). *Notebooks 1914-1916*. In: (1984). G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, eds., Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Further quoted as *NB*.

364 Wittgenstein, *NB*, 15. 10. 1914; *TLP*, 2.12.

365 Morris, M. (2008). *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Wittgenstein and the Tractatus*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 119.

in which Wittgenstein emphasized that the world consists of facts. In 2.1, he then proceeds to claim that “[w]e picture facts to ourselves” or that we “[m]ake to ourselves pictures of facts” (*Wir machen uns Bilder der Tatsachen*).<sup>366</sup> Already from this sentence, we may guess that these pictures of facts should themselves be considered as facts. And it is indeed what Wittgenstein wishes to claim – in 2.141, he explicitly states that “[t]he picture is a fact”. But what kind of fact is it? While there are to be found in the world many facts, they do not represent anything other than themselves, while a picture as a fact is supposed to do precisely this. How does it happen that a picture is a special kind of fact which has a capacity to represent other facts or situations which may occur in the world?

To this query, Wittgenstein offers an answer by explicating, in 2.14, that “[t]he picture consists in the fact that its elements are combined with one another in a definite way”. This connection of a picture’s elements is called the structure of the picture (2.15). The possibility of this structure is the pictorial form (*die Form der Abbildung*) (2.151).<sup>367</sup> However, Wittgenstein immediately adds that the pictorial form is not only the possibility of picture’s elements being combined in a definite way, but also, essentially, the “[p]ossibility that the *things* are combined with one another as are the elements of the picture” (2.151).<sup>368</sup> Thus, the pictorial form expresses the possibility of elements of the picture and those of the pictured being combined in the same way.

This form is subsequently famously labelled as that which the picture must have in common with the depicted situation so that it can picture it at all (2.16). This “something in common” amounts to “something identical” (*etwas identisch*) which must be shared by both the picture and the pictured (2.161).<sup>369</sup> That what must be shared by the picture and the pictured so that the first can represent the second is thus the possibility of their elements being combined in the same way. In both picture and pictured situation, it is necessary that their elements may be combined with one another in a definite way – and this possibility of the combination must be the same in picture and the pictured.

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366 The first translation is Pearls and McGuiness’, the second one Ogden’s.

367 This account is analogous to that of the structure and form of a state of affairs.

368 Emphasis mine.

369 This demand for something identical in the picture and the pictured appeared as early as the *Notebooks*, where Wittgenstein noted that “[t]he theory of logical portrayal by means of language says – quite generally: In order for it to be possible that a proposition should be true or false – agree with reality or not – for this to be possible something in the proposition must be *identical* with reality” (Wittgenstein, *NB*, 20. 10. 1914; emphasis in the original).

The pictorial form is the link that is formed between the picture and the pictured situation by which the picture “reaches up” to reality (2.15121). However, since Wittgenstein compares a picture’s way of reaching up the reality to the measurement by the scale applied to reality (2.1512), we should be careful not to imagine that the picture and the pictured are completely identical. The reality which is to be represented is touched only “by the end-points of the graduating lines” on the scale (2.15121). Using this metaphor, Wittgenstein wishes to claim that it is (merely) the elements of the picture which touch reality, not the picture as a whole. Wittgenstein describes the “touching” by which the picture’s elements reach reality as the “pictorial relationship” (*die abbildende Beziehung*). While the pictorial form (*die Form der Abbildung*) referred to above is that which is identical in the picture and the pictured, the pictorial relationship amounts to the coordination of the elements of the picture with the elements of the represented situation (2.1514).<sup>370</sup> This coordination may be imagined, according to another famous metaphor, as “the feelers with which the picture touches reality” (2.1515).

Let’s now return to our initial inquiry into how to account for the special status of a picture as a fact with representational capacity. Based on the presented exposition, we may say that a picture is a fact which may represent something other than itself because as a fact whose elements are related to one another in a particular way, it represents (*vorstellt*) that the things are *so* combined (2.15), i.e. combined in the same way. In the fact which is a picture it is included that the organization of its elements says something about the organization of the elements of the represented situation. And, it can represent that the things are so combined, in turn, given that the picture has “something in common” with the pictured (pictorial form) and that the picture’s elements are coordinated, i.e. reach to the elements of the pictured.

Let us try to imagine all this by using a particular example. Suppose, for instance, that we make ourselves a picture which is the fact that the names “the dog”, “is sitting on” and “the sofa” are connected so that the final whole has a form of “the dog is sitting in the sofa”. How does it happen that this particular fact represents another fact, namely that the dog is sitting on the sofa? The picture may represent, firstly, by virtue of being in possession of its particular

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370 Wittgenstein tackled this issue first in the *Notebooks*, where he noted that “[t]he general concept of the proposition carries with it a quite general concept of the coordination of proposition and situation [...]” (*NB*, 29. 9. 1914) and that “[t]he coordination of the picture and the pictured is possible merely by means of the correlations of their elements” (*Ibid.*, 25. 9. 1914). In the *Notebooks*, Wittgenstein labelled this coordination the “method of representation” (*Ibid.*, 30. 10. 1914) or “the way of representing” (*Ibid.*) and claimed that it is only with this “method” or “way” that a picture can represent a situation.



pictorial form: this form is the possibility of the picture's elements (here the expressions "the dog", "sitting on" and "the sofa") being combined in a definite way, along with the possibility that the objects (the dog, the relation of sitting on and the sofa) are combined with one another as the elements of the picture are (2.15). Secondly, it is necessary that picture's elements (names "the dog" etc.) are correlated with the objects to be represented (the dog etc.).<sup>371</sup>

So far, I have been discussing *a* picture and it may therefore be imagined that each single picture may represent – thanks to its above analysed features – on its own, without the relation to other pictures. However, it is also essential to Wittgenstein's account of the representation of the world by means of pictures that we cannot account for this representation in this way. On the contrary, Wittgenstein puts forward a conception of representation according to which each picture may represent a particular situation since it is located within the context of other pictures – and since the represented situation is similarly located in the context of other situations. This context is provided using the notion of "logical space". Each picture - and each represented situation - is located in the particular place within the logical space by means of its "coordinates" (3.41).

What, however, are the coordinates in the case of pictures and pictured situations and how do they "allocate" to each picture or situation a particular position within the logical space? One may claim that this allocation is given by the form which every single picture or situation exhibits. This form amounts to the possibility of the structure of a picture or situation. This structure, in turn, amounts to the way in which elements are connected in a picture or situation. Thus, the exhibited structure is determined by the way in which the elements of a picture or a pictured situation are connected to each other. To the nature of every element, it belongs that it may occur in many situations or pictures and these possibilities of occurrence are essential for each element (2.0123).<sup>372</sup>

Employing the metaphor of the logical space and coordinates, we may imagine that the elements from which a picture or a situation pictured is composed (names or objects) are the coordinates which allocate a particular position to that picture or situation. Subsequently, we may consider each particular place of the logical space to either include the actualized situation or not – supposing, if not, that it is an empty space in which this situation however may occur.

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371 I will discuss the possibility of this correlation later in the sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2.

372 Wittgenstein formulates this principle expressly only for states of affairs, but it may be claimed that the same holds for pictures (as representations of situations) as well.

Within this metaphor of logical space, it is to be explained what Wittgenstein means by his claim that by any single proposition, the whole of logical space must be given (3.42). I presume it is intended to express the thought that the knowledge of one proposition implies that we may *understand* all other propositions which are or may be located in the logical space (although we cannot know whether these propositions are true or false). And similarly, we may claim that from the occurrence of one situation, we cannot infer about all other situations, whether they occur or not, but we understand that they *may* either occur or not in particular places within the logical space.<sup>373</sup>

Logical space thus forms a specially interconnected net in which we cannot be in possession of *a priori* knowledge of whether any situation occurs or any proposition is true, but by grasping of which we do know which situation *may* occur in any given place, and understand the meaning of any proposition which may be formulated. I will refer further to the significant role of these considerations in subsequent sections.<sup>374</sup>

## 5.2.2 Proposition and Judgement

As I said in the previous section, pictures are, for Wittgenstein, representational facts. The same holds also for propositions and thoughts: a proposition (or a thought) is a picture in so far as the fact that its (verbal or psychic) elements are combined in a certain way represents that the elements of the represented situation are combined in the same way. Even if the transition from the picture in general to propositions and thoughts might thus seem unproblematic, there is a difficulty in that, as Anthony Kenny noted, there seems to be two meanings of a “thought” present in the *Tractatus*.<sup>375</sup> On the one hand, a thought is a psychological fact that there is a relation between several psychic elements. On the other hand, it amounts to a proposition with a sense. It is therefore necessary to proceed by clarifying what “a thought” actually means for Wittgenstein in the *Tractatus*.

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373 Since states of affairs, from which any fact is composed (*besteht aus*) (TLP, 2.034), are mutually independent according to Wittgenstein (2.061) and thus from the (non)existence of one of them, we cannot infer either the existence or non-existence of any other (2.062), the determination of the existence or nonexistence of a state of affairs in any particular point in the logical place is independent of the determination of existence or nonexistence of other states of affairs in other places within the logical space. With facts and situations which may occur, it is more complicated since they are connected by various mutual relations (e.g. of mutual exclusion, conjunction, consequence etc.). From the occurrence of one fact, I definitely cannot say about all other situation, whether they occur or not; but I understand which situations may occur.

374 Especially in sections 5.3.2 and 5.4.

375 Kenny, A. (1981). Wittgenstein’s Early Philosophy of Mind. In: I. Block., ed., *Perspectives on the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*. Cambridge (Mass.): MIT Press, pp. 140-147; pp. 140-141.

Wittgenstein opens the third section of the *Tractatus* by asserting that a thought is a logical picture of a fact (3), an assertion from which nothing specific about the nature of thought follows yet.<sup>376</sup> In 3.1, a thought is presented in the first, psychological sense, being described as something which is *expressed* in a proposition: “In a proposition a thought finds an expression [*sich ausdrückt*] that can be perceived by the senses.” This suggests that a thought is not identical to a proposition, but can be expressed by means of one. The same point seems to follow from 3.2, which claims that a thought is expressed by a proposition in such a way that elements of both correspond to each other: “In a proposition a thought can be expressed in such a way that elements of the propositional sign correspond to the objects of the thought” (3.2).

However, following the introduction of the notion of a “propositional sign”, it begins to appear that a thought *is* a proposition. In 3.12, a propositional sign is defined as “the sign with which we express a thought” and a proposition is identified with “a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world”. This still indicates that a thought is different from a proposition since a thought is expressed by means of a propositional sign. However, in 3.5, a thought is described as “a propositional sign, applied and thought out”; and in 4, a thought is explicitly defined as “a proposition with a sense”. In this account, the notion of a “thought” serves to draw a distinction between a (mere) propositional sign and a proposition. A proposition is a propositional sign *plus* its projective relation to the world.

This propositional sign is merely a theoretical construction, a proposition considered without this projective relation, i.e. without its method of projection (a coordination of a proposition with a situation based on the correlations of their elements). It is merely a theoretical construct since, as I have pointed out above, there is no picture without this projective relation because the notion of a pictorial form implies the presence of a pictorial relationship. To emphasize that a proposition does include this projective relation and that it is thus able to express its sense, it is called a “thought”.<sup>377</sup> Or, in other words, when a propositional sign is “applied and thought out” (3.5), it becomes a proposition which expresses its sense and which

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376 A picture is called “logical” by Wittgenstein when it shares with the pictured situation at least the “logical form”, i.e. the minimum which is necessary for a picture to be a picture of this situation (see *TLP*, 2.18 and 2.181).

377 In this context, Candlish and Damnjanovic assert that one of the central claims made about propositions in the *Tractatus* is that they are not on their own essentially representational or significant (Candlish, S. and Damnjanovic, N. (2012). The ‘Tractatus’ and the Unity of the Proposition. in: J. Zalabardo, ed., *Wittgenstein’s Early Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 64-98, p. 81ff). However, it seems to me that the precise opposite is the case – as facts, propositions are essentially representational. It might be that they had in mind the “propositional sign”; however, even about it, Wittgenstein claims that it is a fact (*TLP*, 3.14ff).

may also be called a “thought”.

A thought thus seems to be both something expressed by a proposition and this proposition itself. There are several comments, mostly from the *Notebooks* and letters to Russell, from which it is evident that Wittgenstein intended to use the expression “thought” to draw attention to the fact that there occur psychic elements in the mind of a judging person. Most famously, there is a letter to Russell from 19 August 1919 in which Wittgenstein responds to Russell’s queries about the *Tractatus*.<sup>378</sup> To Russell’s question of whether a thought consists of words, Wittgenstein answers with radical “no”, as if bored with the silliness of the question:

“‘Does a *Gedanke* consist of words?’ [Russell’s question] No! But of psychical constituents that have the same sort of relation to reality as words.”<sup>379</sup>

Thus, it is undoubtedly true that Wittgenstein allowed a notion of a “thought” to describe the fact that there are psychic elements somehow assembled together in the mind of a thinker. Even in this event, I don’t think that it would enable us to claim that there are two distinguishable meanings of a thought in the *Tractatus*. For one thing, Wittgenstein holds that “[t]hinking is a kind of language” and that “a thought too is, of course, a logical picture of the proposition, and therefore it just is a kind of proposition”.<sup>380</sup> In this sense, a thought might also be labelled as “a proposition”. What is essential is that the thought, as a mental fact, has the same kind of relation to the pictured situation as a linguistic proposition does, i.e. it is a fact which asserts that elements of that situation are combined in the same way as are the mental elements: both linguistic and mental propositions are logical pictures of situations. And moreover, a thought as a mental proposition is always related to its linguistic expression, i.e. to the proposition by which it is expressed in language and thus in this sense, it does not make an essential difference whether we examine a proposition as linguistic or mental entity.<sup>381</sup> “A thought” is thus a proposition with sense, i.e. with the relation to the represented situation, whether it is composed of mental or linguistic elements. When the notion of a thought is used for a linguistic proposition, Wittgenstein’s aim is to underscore the fact that this proposition is

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378 Wittgenstein, L. (2008). *Wittgenstein in Cambridge: Letters and Documents 1911-1951*. In: B. F. McGuinness, ed., London: Routledge, p. 99.

379 Ibid.

380 Wittgenstein, NB, 9. 12. 1916.

381 Anthony Kenny describes the close relatedness between a thought as a mental occurrence and a proposition as a linguistic entity by claiming that the first is *so* intimately related to the second that they may be considered identical: “thought seems to be related so closely to a proposition as to be capable of being identified with it [...]” (Kenny, 1981, p. 141).

not merely a propositional sign, i.e. something which is not in possession of a projective relation to the world.<sup>382</sup>

After this elucidation, we may move on to consider Wittgenstein's account of judgement or, more precisely, judgement ascriptions (expressions which claim that someone judges that something is the case). It is no exaggeration to say that the features essential to it have been mostly already brought into the fore within the discussion of propositions as facts. This is by no means a mere coincidence – as we have seen, Wittgenstein insists that a correct theory of judgement must be grounded in a proper theory of propositions. It is this theory of propositions, as offered in Wittgenstein's treatment of propositions as pictures (in sections 3 and 4 of the *Tractatus*), which already provided us with the answer to our query of how something may be representational: propositions may represent something other than themselves by being facts which share the pictorial form and pictorial relation with their referents (pictured situations).

The famous section, in which Wittgenstein mentions explicitly the theory of judgement (section 5.54) serves, I am persuaded, as a further demonstration of the correctness of this account of propositions. What we encounter in the section 5.54 is an application of the picture theory of propositions to the account of judgement ascriptions. Like Russell, Wittgenstein brings forward the expressions of the form “A judges/believes that *p*”, which he introduces as an apparent counterexample to his persuasion that “[i]n the general propositional form propositions occur in other propositions only as bases of truth-operations” (5.54):

“At first sight it looks as if it were also possible for one proposition to occur in another in a different way [than as a basis for truth-operations]. Particularly with certain forms of proposition in psychology, such as ‘A believes that *p* is the case’ and ‘A has the thought *p*’, etc. For if these are considered superficially, it looks as if the proposition *p* stood in some kind of relation to an object A. (And in modern theory of knowledge (Russell, Moore, etc.) these propositions have actually been construed in this way.)” (5.541)

“It is clear, however, that ‘A believes that *p*’, ‘A has the thought *p*’, and ‘A says *p*’ are of the form ‘*p* says *p*’: and this does not involve a correlation of a fact with an object, but rather the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects.” (5.542)

Wittgenstein thus contends in 5.541 that it really seems that there are propositions in which other propositions may appear in another way than as bases for truth operations, most

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382 As I pointed out in my discussion concerning the notion of a picture, there is in the strict sense no picture without this projective relation, since the notion of a pictorial form already implies the existence of the pictorial relationship, see section 5.2.1.

prominently “certain propositions in psychology”, such as judgement- or belief-ascriptions “A believes that *p*”, “A judges that *p*” etc. Then, he makes a decisive move, asserting that, against all appearances, we cannot analyse these psychological propositions as propositions in which a “*p*” stands in a relation to the subject A.<sup>383</sup>

This claim is, however, by no means obvious. It is not that Russell (or Moore), whom Wittgenstein explicitly mentions here, committed in their theories of judgement some elementary philosophical mistake – rather, it seems to be a presupposition of all theories of judgement I know about that there is a subject (variously conceived) which has some (variously conceived) relation to that about which it is judged (variously conceived). Wittgenstein goes expressly and radically against this generally held, basic presupposition about the form of judgement ascriptions when he claims in the famous paragraph 5.542 that when properly analysed, propositions of the form of “A believes (thinks, judges etc.) that *p*” have actually quite a different form, namely “‘*p*’ says *p*” and that what is involved in this proposition is not “a correlation of a fact with an object, but rather the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects” (5.542).

It is at this point that the already emphasized dependence of this account on the previous analysis of propositions as facts becomes obvious. In the proposition “‘*p*’ says *p*”, there are two occurrences of *ps* – the first one with the quotation marks, the second without them. Of course, the essential question is what these two *ps* amount to. Since we are dealing with the ascriptions of beliefs and judgements, it seems reasonable to suppose that the first *p*, the one with the quotation marks, stands for a thought (a mental proposition) conceived of as a picture. Since it is a picture, the second *p*, the one without quotation marks, will be an expression of what this thought presents, the situation that is thought (judged, believed etc.) to obtain.<sup>384</sup> The judgement ascription, initially having the form “A believes (or judges) that *p*”, thus after Wittgenstein’s analysis looks as follows:

“‘*p*’ (a thought) says *p* (state of affairs)”

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383 Instead of a “subject”, Wittgenstein employs here the notion of “an object”: “[...] if these [propositions of psychology] are considered superficially, it looks as if the proposition *p* stood in some kind of relation to an object A” (*TLP*, 5.541). By this choice of words, Wittgenstein probably wished to emphasize that propositions of the type “A believes *p*” cannot be understood as residing in the relation between two entities – a proposition and an object of any kind.

384 This interpretation is shared with most of the commentators (e.g. Potter, 2008, pp. 221-222; Hanks, 2012, pp. 59-61; Glock, H.-J. (1996). *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 59).

“The correlations of facts” Wittgenstein discusses here is the coordination between a thought and a situation by means of correlations between their elements, i.e. a one-to-one correspondence of the elements of the thought and the objects in the situation. Based on this analysis of judgement ascriptions, it follows that in ascribing judgement to someone, we claim that his judgement consists in correlating the elements of his thought with the elements of that what it is about (a particular situation). This account may be considered a further development of the theory of representation provided in the notion of a proposition as a representational fact: in a judgement ascription, we put on display the fact that when someone judges (that something is the case), the elements of her thought are correlated with the objects of particular situation.

As I mentioned, Wittgenstein officially introduced his theory of judgment ascriptions as an attempt to provide an explanation in line with his principle that if one proposition occurs in another proposition, it must do so as a basis of truth operations (6.001). This principle follows from even more general one according to which “[a]ll propositions are results of truth-operations on elementary propositions” (5.3). It is true that Wittgenstein analysed away the proposition with a clearly intentional context “A believes that *p*” into “‘*p*’ says *p*”. But it does not seem that this alternative form of the proposition scores any better: “‘*p*’ says *p*” seems to include an intensional context as well. A possible way out may reside in conceiving the expression “‘*p*’ says *p*” as a mere pseudo-proposition which does not really assert anything. In this case, we may claim that the expression “‘*p*’ says *p*” shows, rather than says, something, namely that in our ascriptions of beliefs or judgements, it is put into view that a thought represents a situation. Whether this “way out” is satisfactory is at least debatable.<sup>385</sup> But resolving this debate is not essential to our central purpose, which is to consider how exactly Wittgenstein intended his proposed analysis to provide a response, or a more appropriate alternative, to Russell’s theory of judgement.

Since Wittgenstein intended to provide an improvement on Russell’s explanation for judgements’ possibility of being representational, it is appropriate to ask why precisely he may have considered himself succeeding where Russell had failed. I suggested in the previous chapter that his objection to Russell’s multiple relation theory was its apparent failure to explain

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385 There have been debates over the nature of the expression of “‘*p*’ says *p*”; Anscombe, for instance, asserted that it is a possible form of a proposition (see Anscombe, G. E. M (1959). *An Introduction to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus*. South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press. Second, revised edition in: (1965). New York: Harper & Row, pp. 88-90) while Kenny was persuaded it is a pseudo-proposition which is always true, since it identifies “*p*” precisely as a proposition which says (that) *p* (Kenny, 1981, p. 145).



how a judgement comes to have a representational, intentional character. Informed by this criticism, Wittgenstein's contribution to the theory of judgement resides primarily in his notion of a proposition as a fact with representational capacity, while the theory of judgement ascriptions adds to this conception that this representational power of a proposition becomes significantly visible when we describe that someone judges – we observe there the correlations of two facts (a thought and a represented situations).

Moreover, the analysis of judgement ascriptions also reveals that when considered in this way, the judging subject seems to lose its importance, since the essential task of the proposition (its representational capacity) is fully explained by its being a fact which represents a fact; the formulation “*p*’ says *p*”, which omits mention of any judging subject, emphasizes this. However, as we will observe in the next section, many commentators are unsatisfied with this rendering of Wittgenstein's theory of judgement: they attempt to argue that a judging subject is indeed essential to account for the proposition's representational capacity. Let's thus look at their argumentation.

### 5.3 The Role of Transcendental Subject

As I emphasized in the previous section, it is possible that for Wittgenstein the analysis of judgement ascriptions is intended not only to demonstrate how two facts are correlated in the ascriptions of judgements, but also how the subject is unimportant for this analysis. Wittgenstein indeed claims in the paragraph following the analysis of judgement ascriptions (5.5421):

“This shows too that there is no such thing as the soul – the subject, etc. – as it is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day.

Indeed a composite soul would no longer be a soul.”

It is reasonable to assume that the demonstrative pronoun “this” at the beginning of the sentence develops the claim 5.542 about which it makes a further remark. If so, Wittgenstein states that from the fact that the judgement ascriptions have the form of “*p*’ says *p*”, i.e. that they express correlations of two facts, it follows that “there is no such thing as the soul” (subject), “as it is conceived in the superficial psychology of the present day”. To this, he finally adds that “a composite soul would no longer be a soul”.

What are the inferences Wittgenstein draws here? Firstly, if in judgement ascriptions

the correlations of two facts (a thought and a situation judgement is about) are expressed, there is no soul – or, in other words, a subject of a judgement. The last sentence seems to be explanatory – if judgement is of this form, there cannot be any soul *since* a composite soul would be no proper soul. The core claim of the argument is that for a judgement, it is essential that a fact with a complex structure (that our mental or verbal elements are combined in some way) represents another fact (occurring situation or that which may occur). If so, then, there is no need to presuppose any role for the judging subject (a “soul”). Moreover, if this soul were to play any role in judgement, it would need to be composite, since only composite entities can represent situations. But “a composite soul would no longer be a soul”, presumably because it is (imagined by us as) something single, non-composite.

### 5.3.1 Glock’s and Kenny’s Accounts

The account sketched above may be labelled “the subjectless theory of judgement”. However, many commentators are not satisfied with the rendering in which a judging subject seems utterly irrelevant, even to the extent that it can simply disappear or amount merely to a series of psychical processes, not to any substantial unity behind them.<sup>386</sup> They thus set out – in various ways – to argue that there is indeed room for the significance of a subject in Wittgenstein’s account, so long as we reconsider its nature: it is not an empirical, but a transcendental subject, supplying the conditions for the meaningfulness of language. They conscript to this end the *Tractarian* concluding considerations about the transcendental, willing subject into Wittgenstein’s account of judgement presented in 5.541-5.542, arguing that on a deeper level, this transcendental subject has a crucial role to play in providing language with meaning.

One of the commentators who elaborates on this account is H.-J. Glock, whose *A Wittgenstein Dictionary* repeatedly recurs to the link between a judgment and a subject. His contention is that the transcendental subject confers the meaning on words and sentences: “[i]t is the mind which gives meaning to language by breathing life into sounds and inscriptions that would otherwise be ‘dead’”.<sup>387</sup> Glock summarizes Wittgenstein’s account of judgement using

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<sup>386</sup> This account resembles Humean account of judgment in that the thinking subject (distinguishable from the empirical subject) is considered a philosophical fiction. As Hume comments in his *Treatise*: “For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception” (Hume, D. (1738-1740). *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Reprinted in: 1975, L. A. Selby-Bigge, ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 252.

<sup>387</sup> Glock, H.-J. (1996). *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 358.

Wittgenstein's conception of the thought–fact coordination, proposing that their relation “depends on the metaphysical subject, a linguistic soul which breathes life into mere signs”.<sup>388</sup> Even if Wittgenstein relegates the description of the constituents of our thoughts to empirical psychology, in the background of his theory of judgement, there still lingers, Glock is persuaded, a silent persuasion that a transcendental subject is responsible for conferring meaning both to thoughts (mental propositions) and linguistic propositions:

“Although, under the pretext of anti-psychologism, the *Tractatus* relegates to empirical psychology the question of what the constituents of thoughts are, it incorporates the mentalist idea that it is the mind which gives meaning to language.”<sup>389</sup>

The transcendental subject is portrayed as supplying language with meaning by means of “acts of meaning”. Correlations link names with objects through these acts of meaning which are effected by some kind of an ostensive definition: “the connection between words (names) and their meanings (referents) is established by ostensive definition, which establishes a mental association between word and object”.<sup>390</sup> According to Glock, the correlations between names and objects thus rest on our carrying out the act of ostensive definition, i.e. pointing at the objects with the intention to call them by particular names. This act of pointing gives meaning to the names and, subsequently, the whole of language. It, however, cannot be performed by an empirical subject which is “merely a complex of the psychic elements that are to be correlated with objects”.<sup>391</sup> Therefore, it is “[a]rguably performed by the will of the metaphysical self”.<sup>392</sup>

Glock quotes Wittgenstein's assertion from the *Notebooks* to the effect that correlating words with their referents is something *we* do<sup>393</sup>: “By my correlating the components of the picture with objects, it [the picture] comes to represent a situation and to be right or wrong”.<sup>394</sup> This means, according to Glock, that forging the correlations amounts to our thinking the sense of a proposition. This, in turn, implies that the use of a meaningful proposition produces a thought which must incessantly accompany speaking.<sup>395</sup>

Before commenting on this nontrivial claim, let's consider one other author who draws

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388 Ibid., p. 350.

389 Ibid., p. 249.

390 Ibid., p. 41.

391 Ibid., p. 250.

392 Ibid., p. 350.

393 Ibid., p. 278.

394 Wittgenstein, *NB*, 26. 11. 1914; emphasis in the original.

395 Glock, 1996, p. 358.

a link between the account of a judgement and transcendental subject, namely Anthony Kenny. In his article *Wittgenstein's Early Philosophy of Mind* he, like Glock, highlights Wittgenstein's emphasis on *us* conferring meaning to language. True, Wittgenstein also repeats that this meaning is a matter of mere convention.<sup>396</sup> However, Kenny argues, there must be some "acts of will that confer the meaning, that set up the conventions".<sup>397</sup>

These acts cannot, Kenny argues, be located in the empirical subject – because if they were, he claims, they would be susceptible to the study of natural science and therefore "incapable of the ineffable activity of conferring meaning".<sup>398</sup> Therefore, it must be the metaphysical subject, whose activity is ineffable in a meaningful language, but whose proper functioning is presupposed by this language, and who is the ultimate source of the meaning-attribution within the domain of language. This argument which Kenny employs is, however, circular: the conclusion which Kenny draws (that the empirical subject, studiable by empirical psychology, is incapable of ineffable meaning-conferring activity) is presupposed already in the initial notion of the "empirical subject" – it is a subject studiable by empirical psychology in the notion of which it is already included that it cannot account for the explanation of meaning.

Kenny, in common with Glock, refers to Wittgenstein's discussion regarding the subject of the will as providing further details about the transcendental subject which provides language with meaning – it amounts to the metaphysical subject and a "pure will of the extra-mundane solipsistic metaphysical self" which provides our thoughts with meaning.<sup>399</sup> Pursuing the distinction between empirical and metaphysical (willing, transcendental) subject, Kenny reminds us that we need to pay particular attention to properly distinguishing psychological considerations which can merely describe thoughts as particular configurations of psychic elements and the transcendental inquiry into the sources of meaning of these thoughts:

"In the thought itself, perhaps, we can distinguish between the particular mental configuration, studiable by psychology, and the significance or intentionality of that configuration, conferred by the metaphysical self."<sup>400</sup>

While the considerations regarding the configuration of psychic elements relate merely

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396 Wittgenstein emphasizes the arbitrariness of correlations in the *Notebooks*, e.g. 15. 10., 22. 10. and 3. 11. 1914.

397 Kenny, 1981, p. 146.

398 Ibid.

399 Ibid., p. 147.

400 Ibid., p. 146.

to empirical, contingent facts about our thinking, Wittgenstein's interest is, under Glock's and Kenny's interpretations, directed towards the sphere of the "logical and intentional" (as Kenny formulates it), represented by the meaning-conferring acts carried out by the transcendental subject.<sup>401</sup> To summarize, both Glock and Kenny assert that behind Wittgenstein's account of meaning, there is the presupposition of a metaphysical subject who supplies names with meanings, i.e. sets up meaningful correlations between names and objects and, by doing this, provides the language as a whole with meaning. We may call this subject "transcendental" in the sense that it represents a necessary condition for the meaningfulness of language – without the transcendental subject's correlating names and objects, language would not be intentional and would not represent anything external to itself.

### 5.3.2 Correlations, Signs and Symbols

Both above-presented authors are thus persuaded that, as Glock expresses it, Wittgenstein employs in the *Tractatus* the "mentalist idea that it is the mind which gives meaning to language".<sup>402</sup> Elaborating on this idea, Glock repeatedly makes use of the metaphor of the mind which breathes life into signs: "it is the mind which gives meaning to language by breathing life into sounds and inscriptions that would otherwise be 'dead'".<sup>403</sup> Mind is identified with metaphysical subject or soul: "the metaphysical subject, a linguistic soul which breathes life into mere signs" or a "metaphysical subject invoked by solipsism sets limits to language by infusing words with life".<sup>404</sup> Breathing life into signs amounts, according to Glock, to "giving meaning to language".<sup>405</sup> However, to *breathe life into signs* or to *infuse words with life* are metaphors, so we should inquire what exactly they endeavour to convey. Specifically, what does it mean that signs are *dead* without mind breathing life into them and what kind of action is this breathing life into signs (or infusing them with life)?

It seems that the dead signs into which meaning has to be injected or "breathed" are names in propositions which are not yet correlated with objects. Names and objects can be linked (correlated) only "through acts of meaning"<sup>406</sup> which Glock apparently identifies with

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401 Ibid.

402 Glock, 1996, p. 249.

403 Ibid., p. 358.

404 Ibid., p. 250.

405 Ibid. p. 358.

406 Ibid., p. 350.

the carrying out of an ostensive definition.<sup>407</sup> We need to know the name to be used for the thing and point at the thing, proclaiming: “I mean *that* thing by *this* name”. Glock’s “act of meaning” thus amounts here to intentionally endowing a thing with a particular name that we choose for it. Similarly, Kenny suggests there are “acts of will that confer the meaning that set up conventions”.<sup>408</sup> “Acts of will” amount here to the acts of mind in Glock’s vocabulary and these mental acts are again meaning-conferring acts. Then, this conferred meaning is claimed to set up conventions. The idea is thus similar to Glock’s – behind conventions (i.e. conventional correlations of names and objects) there need to be some mental acts which enable these correlations to take place.<sup>409</sup>

Apart from the establishment of correlations between names and objects, there is yet another step, somehow hidden, yet present in the accounts of Glock and Kenny that is necessary for establishing the meaningfulness of language, namely the act of transforming mere signs into symbols. This transformation is the topic tackled by Wittgenstein in the section 3.32 of the *Tractatus*. A sign is, in general, what we can perceive of a symbol (3.32). A sign amounts either to a propositional sign (“a sign with which we express a proposition” (3.12)) or to the parts of a proposition – words. Wittgenstein discusses the difficulties arising from the fact that our language is not a perfect sign-language in which the signification of all signs would be unambiguous – we may encounter the same sign which however signifies two (or even more) different objects (3.322). The way in which the sign signifies is its “mode of signification” (3.322). Thus, what Wittgenstein asserts is that one sign may be used with two (or more) different modes of signification.

So, for instance, the sign “is” possesses three different modes of signification: it may be used as a copula (“A is green”), as a sign for identity (“A is A”) or as an expression for existence (“A is” meaning that “A exists”). Or, to adduce another example, in the sentence “Green is green”, the first use of the “green” amounts to the proper name and the second to the adjective which describes the object named. In both cases, we have one word signifying in different ways. These words have different meanings and they amount to, Wittgenstein emphasizes, *different*

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407 “[T]he connection between words (names) and their meanings (referents) is established by ostensive definition, which establishes a mental association between word and object” (Ibid., p. 41).

408 Kenny, 1981, p. 146.

409 Only Kenny does not specify whether he considers these underlying acts as being based on the ostensive definitions.

*symbols* (3.323) even if as *signs*, they look the same.

In the case of such signs, the task to be done is to carry out the transition from this sign to a symbol that possesses merely one mode of signification. Thus, when we encounter the word “is” in a sentence, we have to decide how it will be employed – will it be used as a copula, as a sign of identity or as an expression for the fact that something exists? In other, unambiguous cases, the transformation of the sign into symbol still needs to be undertaken, even though we then proceed from one sign (e.g. “dog”) to a symbol (a sign “dog” used within a proposition). In both cases, moving from sign to symbol requires applying the sign within a proposition.

To put all this into several words, Wittgenstein postulates that “in order to recognize a symbol by its sign we must observe how it is used with a sense” (3.326) and that “[a] sign does not determine a logical form unless it is taken together with its logico-syntactical employment” (3.327). The above-presented considerations regarding the signs “is” serve as the examples of our using a sign with a sense, transforming it thus into a meaningful symbol. The particular way a sign is used is its “logico-syntactical employment”, i.e. the realization of the rules which govern the way the sign may be used within a language. The notion of an “application” of signs is of special importance here: “What signs fail to express, their application shows. What signs slurs over, their application says clearly” (3.262).

Both Glock and Kenny depict this transition from a mere sign to a symbol with a particular use as something the transcendental subject needs to carry out (even if they both emphasize primarily the role of this subject in forging the correlations between names and objects). Kenny makes use, as I had, of Wittgenstein’s example of the sign “is”, reminding us that it may signify in various ways and that what makes the difference between sign and symbol is *the significant use* of the sign.<sup>410</sup> In addition, Kenny alleges that a logical multiplicity of a proposition is determined by rules of logical syntax which are tacit conventions relating the sign and symbol.<sup>411</sup>

To summarize, there are two essential roles assigned to the metaphysical subject within the picture Kenny and Glock put forward: to make a sign into a symbol and to forge the correlations between names and objects. Let us investigate both these roles. As for the

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410 Kenny, 1981, p. 144; *TLP*, 3.3.22, 3.326, 3.327.

411 Kenny, 1981, *Ibid.*



realization of the correlations between names and objects, we may wonder whether the role of transcendental subject in conferring meaning to language is indeed necessary and whether we couldn't do merely with the empirical subject studiable by psychology. As I pointed out above, Kenny's argument supposedly ruling out this possibility is circular: he presupposes the conclusion of his argument, namely that endowing language with meaning cannot take place within the empirical subject studiable by empirical psychology.

Glock interprets Wittgenstein's claim from the *Notebooks* to the effect that correlations are something we do<sup>412</sup> as a statement that realizing the correlations amounts to our thinking the sense of a proposition which means that in using meaningful propositions, there is also produced a thought which must incessantly accompany speaking. However, I do not consider this reading necessary. When focusing, together with Glock, on the quotations from *Notebooks* as proof, we may wonder why Wittgenstein so often emphasized there that correlations are arbitrary.<sup>413</sup> If he had wished to underscore the significance of transcendental subject behind the correlations, it is hard to see why he paid such extensive attention to their arbitrary nature.

As I see it, another reading suggests itself: Wittgenstein may be interpreted as never suggesting that there has to be transcendental subject to forge the name-object correlations. Rather, these correlations can be located into the field studiable by empirical psychology. The correlations would in this case amount to particular cases of the psychical processes psychology is interested in. Since the empirical subject is to be conceived in the Humean fashion as amounting merely to psychological processes (and not any substantial entity behind them), these correlations would be special instances of the psychological occurrences labelled as the "empirical subject".

In addition to this, we should also take into account that name-object correlations always take place within the context of the whole language. For one thing, as I have pointed out earlier, every single proposition determines the whole of logical space, i.e. by understanding that it is

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412 "By my correlating the components of the picture with objects, it comes to represent a situation and to be right or wrong" (Wittgenstein, *NB*, 26. 11. 1914, emphasis in the original).

413 This line of thought is supported by Wittgenstein's repeated emphasis, both in the *Notebooks* and in the *Tractatus*, on correlations being arbitrary, i.e. their being set by us, but by means of arbitrary stipulations. "The proposition is supposed to give a logical model of situation. It can surely only do this because objects have been arbitrarily correlated with its [situation's] elements" (*NB*, 15. 10. 1914); "Assignment of names must take place by means of arbitrary stipulation. Every prop[osition] must contain features with arbitrarily determined references" (*NB*, 22. 10. 1914.); "That arbitrary correlation of sign and thing signified which is a condition of the possibility of the propositions [...] in the elementary proposition [...] occurs by means of names" (*NB*, 3. 11. 1914.). Further e.g. *NB*, 22. 8. 14, 26. 11. 14; *TLP* 3.322, 3.342, 3.315, 5.473, 6.124.

either true or false, we are able to understand all other propositions formulable in language. If so, no single name-object correlation happens without informing us about many other possible connections within language.<sup>414</sup> At this point, we may return to Kenny's claim, which seems to me to point in a similar direction, namely that the proposition's multiplicity is determined by rules of logical syntax (tacit conventions relating a sign and symbol).<sup>415</sup> We may get some inspiration from this description even if we disagree with Kenny's view that these conventions need to be supported by the meaning-providing acts of transcendental subject. What Kenny presumably wishes to claim is that no single proposition alone may determine the correlations of its elements (signs) with the objects of the represented situations since this determination always takes place within the whole of language which is already governed by many tacitly presupposed rules and conventions. Thus, every single proposition determines the whole of logical space but it may do so merely because it is located in this space which, in turn, determines this proposition's relation to the represented situation.

Might the transcendental subject instead play a role in the transformation of signs into symbols? I am persuaded that it is not to be postulated here either. Rather, as in the case of name-object correlations, sign-symbol transformations always take place within a language in which an immense number of tacit, implicit conventions are already in place. It is never the transcendental subject itself that arbitrarily confers meanings to words and propositions within the realm of his own "private" language. Quite to the contrary, language is something we share, together with all those tacit conventions which orient us in it. Thus, both name-object correlations and sign-symbol transformations are susceptible to the empirical studies concerning the rules governing usage of common human language(s). To postulate, in addition, the role of the transcendental subject providing language with meaning would be not only superfluous, but also misleading, since it would amount to the claim that we cannot do simply with the empirical meaning-conferring acts.

If there is, however, no role for the transcendental subject to be played in the *Tractarian* conception of the meaningfulness of language, is Wittgenstein any closer to (or at least less far away from) Kant's epistemological enterprise that young Moore or Russell were? This is something I will attempt to answer in the following section.

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414 See the the end of section 5.2.1, pp. 106-107.

415 Kenny, 1981, p. 144.

## 5.4. Wittgenstein as a Kantian Philosopher?

I stated in the previous section that I am persuaded there is no significant role to be played by the transcendental subject in providing language with meaning. If so, can we claim that Wittgenstein's theory of judgement is in some sense influenced by Kant's epistemology? There are several authors who argue that Wittgenstein may be indeed considered a Kantian philosopher on account of philosophical similarities unrelated to the notion of transcendental subjectivity. Thus, according to Eric Stenius, Wittgenstein was, in contrast to the Viennese circle of logical positivists, "in essential respects a Kantian philosopher".<sup>416</sup> His anti-Kantianism, if any, allegedly amounted merely to his transformation of the Kantian system, something which does not prevent Wittgenstein from adhering to "a Kantianism of a peculiar kind".<sup>417</sup> Where, according to Stenius, does this transformed Kantianism reside?

In the acceptance of the metaphysical, transcendental subject, but not merely in that. According to Stenius, Wittgenstein, like Kant, employs transcendental deductions to account for the meaningfulness of language. As Stenius describes it, while Kant strove, using transcendental arguments, to delineate the limit of theoretical Reason, Wittgenstein wishes to delineate, by means of the same method, the limits of meaningful language. What is possible for theoretical Reason in Kant is in Wittgenstein changed into that what is describable in meaningful language.<sup>418</sup> Despite this difference, the task of both philosophers is for Stenius identical: to indicate the limit of theoretical discourse.<sup>419</sup>

According to Peter Hacker, another commentator who describes the general common features he found in the Kantian and *Tractarian* projects, Wittgenstein was certainly "sympathetic to Kant's critical method".<sup>420</sup> The similarity between both philosophers is however according to him very general, with many dissimilarities or even contradictory opinions. What is eventually essential is that they both shared the concern about the nature of philosophy and the same idea of what philosophy should concentrate on. The goal of proper philosophical investigations supposedly resided for both in the investigation of the "bounds of

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416 Stenius, E. (1960). *Wittgenstein's Tractatus – A Critical Exposition of Its Main Lines of Thought*. Oxford: Blackwell, p. 214.

417 Ibid.

418 Ibid., p. 218.

419 Ibid.

420 Hacker, P. M. S. (1972). *Insight and Illusion: Themes in the Philosophy of Wittgenstein*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 206.

sense”.<sup>421</sup> Hacker’s Kant and Wittgenstein would agree that many claims of traditional philosophy (metaphysics) transgress these bounds of sense by misusing concepts and making nonsensical claims.<sup>422</sup> With reference to the nature of philosophy, Hacker presents these two philosophers as particularly eager to shed some light on the proper task and limitations of philosophical endeavours. Both of them attempted to “curb its [philosophy’s] metaphysical pretensions by clarifying its status and circumscribing what one may rationally hope for in philosophical investigation”.<sup>423</sup>

And finally, H.-J. Glock – who, as we saw in the earlier discussion of “breathing life into dead signs” is generally inclined to detect transcendental-idealistic notions in the *Tractatus* – claims that “Wittgenstein’s logic of representation” is a direct successor of Kant’s project of transcendental logic since they “both deal with the preconditions for the possibility of symbolic representation [...] and thereby [Wittgenstein] puts the relation between language and reality at the core of analytic philosophy”.<sup>424</sup>

Hacker detects the similarity between Kant and Wittgenstein in very general features of their philosophical enterprises – for our purposes probably too general. It is true that both Kant and Wittgenstein took an interest in the nature of philosophy, striving to unveil where the limit between the sense and nonsense rests (between proper transcendental philosophy and metaphysics for Kant and meaningful representation of the world and nonsense for Wittgenstein). More pressing, however, is the question concerning their ideas on *how* to draw these limits. Stenius and Glock emphasize that both philosophers share their concern with the transcendental conditions underlying the distinction between meaning and nonsense. They both make an inquiry into the possibility of meaningful representation of the world.

One reading of Stenius’ and Glock’s interpretations is that they assert that the transcendental nature of the *Tractatus* may be discovered in Wittgenstein’s employment of the “transcendental method” of inquiry, being realized mainly by using transcendental arguments. Both Stenius’ “transcendental deductions” and Glock’s “logic of representation” concerning the transcendental preconditions suggest that it is precisely the transcendental kind of

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421 Ibid.

422 Ibid., p. 207. It should be noted that Hacker reassessed his approach in the second edition of *Insight and Illusion* in 1987, see pp. 206-214.

423 Ibid.

424 Glock, H.-J. (2010). Vorsprung durch Logik: The German Analytic Tradition. In: O’Hear, A., ed., *German Philosophy Since Kant*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 144.

argumentation which Stenius and Glock consider essentially “Kantian” in the *Tractatus*. The transcendental kind of argument points out certain facts about our cognition and endeavours to demonstrate that these facts are possible merely owing to the underlying – transcendental – conditions. And it is indeed true that there are some arguments with a transcendental shape present in the *Tractatus*. For instance, the argument for the necessary existence of the substance of the world presented in 2.0211-2.0212 may be regarded as transcendental. It points out that we are able to make a picture of the world, insisting that this is possible only due to world’s having a substance. If it hadn’t, then whether proposition has a sense would depend on whether another proposition is true (2.0211) – and that is, according to Wittgenstein, unacceptable.<sup>425</sup>

Another argument of a similar, i.e. transcendental, form may be discovered within Wittgenstein’s discussion regarding “general propositional form”. In 4.5 of the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein holds that we can foresee which form any meaningful proposition has. This is possible only owing to the transcendental condition that all propositions share the same form, i.e. the general propositional form. However, even if we go on to analyse these arguments in greater detail, it is doubtful that the presence of transcendentially shaped arguments in the *Tractatus* is sufficient to make Wittgenstein a “Kantian” philosopher. A more promising approach reveals itself, I believe, if we ask whether the *Tractatus as a whole*, with its overall structure and construction, exhibits some features that imply Kantian influences. We will see in a moment, though, that by looking for this more general, overall approach, we arrive again at the general propositional form, which has been introduced as a result of the transcendentially fashioned argument (in 4.5).

Searching for this overall approach, a valuable inspiration may be derived from Adrian Moore’s book *Points of View*.<sup>426</sup> There, Moore claims that the central aim of the *Tractatus* is to disentangle the puzzling question over the unity – not, as the Russell-Wittgenstein debate might suggest, primarily the unity of particular propositions, but the unity of the world as a whole and the body of our thoughts and propositions. This is, Moore asserts, one unity manifesting itself in two ways: unity of the world on the one side and unity of the body of thoughts and propositions on the other. This two-sided approach to unity accords with my previous

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425 Obviously, this argument stays in need of further elaboration to be comprehensible. Most importantly, one would need to explain what it means that the sense of one proposition depends on the true of another. However, I use this argument here merely to demonstrate the presence of the transcendentially shaped arguments in the *Tractatus* and will thus not delve in further exegetical details.

426 Moore, A. (1997). *Points of view*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

contention that Wittgenstein's opening *Tractarian* ontology and his picture theory may be regarded as two aspects of one single phenomenon: our representation of the world.<sup>427</sup>

The unity which Moore is interested in is the "unity in which everything is held together"<sup>428</sup>, to be characterized as "an abstract, logical unity which contributes nothing to what the world is like but constrains what it could be like"<sup>429</sup> and which also has its form on the subjective side – amounting there, Moore suggests, to the unity of consciousness.<sup>430</sup> While Moore provides a rather general account, I will here attempt to fill it with more details. When we approach the *Tractatus* with this overall unity issue in mind, we indeed uncover several claims, running through it, that suggest the issue bears a special significance for Wittgenstein. As Moore points out, it is noteworthy that, beginning with the sentence that "the world is all that is the case", Wittgenstein proceeds with the second one, claiming that the world is "the totality of facts" (*die Gesamtheit der Tatsachen*) (1.1).<sup>431</sup>

The importance of the world's being composed of facts has been already emphasized – the world is described as composed of facts because it is this kind of composition that is especially salient for world's representation in language.<sup>432</sup> Apart from this, we may notice that emphasis is also laid on world's being the *totality* (*die Gesamtheit*) of facts. It is highly significant that Wittgenstein chose to open the *Tractatus* by discussing this totality. If he had followed Russell or Moore we would expect him to begin with the description of particular, single referents of our judgements. But Wittgenstein uses a top-down approach: he proceeds from the overall structure of the world to particular facts (*Tatsachen*) – or situations (*Sachlagen*) which may occur in the world – and only thereafter to the states of affairs (consisting of objects) from which facts and situations are composed.<sup>433</sup>

Wittgenstein further expands on the topic of the world as a totality in 1.13, where he claims that the world is to be identified with the facts in logical space (*Die Tatsachen im*

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427 See section 5.2, p. 102.

428 Moore, 1997, p. 150.

429 Ibid.

430 "It [this abstract, logical unity] is also the unity of self-consciousness. I recognize it when I view the world self-consciously from my own particular point of view, and come to see everything as being how it is from that point of view" (Ibid.).

431 Ibid., pp. 149-150.

432 See section 5.2, p. 102.

433 The philosophical importance of this top-down approach will be brought forward at the end of this chapter where it will be grasped based on its similarity with Kant's treatment of the overall unity of judgements, see. p. 133.

*logischen Raum sind die Welt*). The totality of facts are thus facts as organized within the logical space. As I see it, it is precisely this notion of *logical space* which is substantial for grasping the kind of unity that world exhibits. Logical space is the space of possibilities of the existence or non-existence of states of affairs: all states of affairs which may ever occur must be locatable within the logical space. On this basis, more complex situations – either occurring (facts) or non-occurring, but with the possibility to occur – are located in this all-encompassing space.

In this sense, the logical space may be understood as that which holds everything together: every fact and also every possible situation which may become actual must be located somewhere in this all-embracing space. On this basis, the logical space also constrains what the world could be like: the world may be composed merely of those actualized situations which already have, even only as possible ones, their places within the logical space. The unity on the objective side, the unity of the world, may be thus conceived of as being given by means of all possible and actual states of affairs being located within this space. The over-arching nature of the logical space, which includes all the possible and actual states of affairs, strikes me as a reason why this space is called “logical” at all – it includes all basic elements (objects and states of affairs composed of them), based on which more complex situations (both possible and actually occurring) may be composed. As such, the space as a complex unity delineates the whole realm of what is possible; any situation which could not be located in this space is “illogical” and cannot belong into the world as a unity.

Let's now turn our attention to what Moore calls the “subjective” side of the unity. While Moore characterizes it as the unity of our viewpoint on the world<sup>434</sup>, it seems to me essential to emphasize that it is the side where the unity of world's representation takes place. There, we notice immediately that the notion of *logical space* is employed once again. While any particular (occurrent or non-occurrent) situation is located at some particular place within logical space, so every picture (of whatever form) “represent a possible situation in logical space” (2.202). And similarly, a proposition as a picture determines one place in the logical space (3.4). This similarity of the account of the objective and subjective perspective of the overall unity is hardly coincidental: there still is one unity as realized at both sides of representation (that what is represented and what represents it).

As for our representation of the world by means of propositions, any proposition (as a

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434 Moore, 1997, p. 151.



logical picture) not only represents one possible situation in the logical space, but it also, by doing this, depicts (*abbildet*) the whole reality: “A proposition can determine (*bestimmen*) only one place in logical space: nevertheless the whole of logical space must already be given (*gegeben sein*) by it” (3.42). As I pointed out earlier, the idea that the entire logical space is “given” by every individual proposition is derived from the idea that understanding the meaning of one proposition – located at one place in logical space – is sufficient for understanding the meaning of any other proposition, located at any other position in logical space.<sup>435</sup> As I also emphasized earlier, the representation by means of a proposition is embedded in a complex representational system in which each single proposition pictures one situation by means of employing the “grammar” (conventional rules) governing the whole space.<sup>436</sup> If this is the case, we may say that the unity provided by the logical space resides not only in delineating the realm of possible propositions to propositions which may occur within it. It also interconnects all propositions into a whole where the putting forward of any single proposition entails the understanding of all propositions which occur or may occur within the rest of the logical space.

Still, it seems to me that we may say even more about the overall unity as it is realized in our representation of the world. With the reference to the overall unity of propositions, there seems to be yet another issue relevant in accounting for the essence of the proposition: *the general propositional form*. This form is first introduced within the context of the above-mentioned argument (from 4.5): there has to be a general propositional form, for all propositions must have a form which we can anticipate. This general propositional form is intended to serve as “a description of the propositions of *any* sign language *whatsoever* [...]”.<sup>437</sup> It is “what *all* propositions, by their very nature, have in common with one another” (5.47).<sup>438</sup>

What, however, does this general propositional form amount to? Wittgenstein formulates it as “*es verhält sich so und so*”, i.e. “this is how things stand” or “such and such is the case”.<sup>439</sup> The proposition, which has as its essence the general propositional form (5.471), thus claims that in the world, situations occur in some particular way: it is claimed that “this

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435 Especially in sections 5.2.1 and 5.3.2.

436 See section 5.3.2.

437 Ibid; emphases in the original.

438 Emphasis in the original.

439 The first translation is Pearls and McGuiness’, the second one Ogden’s. We may notice from the German formulation of the general propositional form (*Es verhält sich so und so*) that it has a close relation to the world’s being composed of facts. The verb *verhalten sich* is the one from which the name for states of affairs, *Sachverhalten*, is derived. (In a state of affairs, *Sachverhalt*, objects stand in a determinate way to one another: “*verhalten sich* in bestimmter Art und Weise zueinander”.)

[the occurrence or non-occurrence of particular situation] is how things stand”. And the general propositional form reappears once again, in a more technical shape, in the fifth section of the *Tractatus* where it is depicted as a fact that each proposition is either an elementary proposition or a complex proposition formed from elementary propositions by the successive application of truth-functional connectives (5.32, 6ff). Thus, each proposition has a foreseeable structure: it is either an elementary proposition or a complex one which is formed from elementary propositions in a predictable manner. If I am given all elementary propositions, I can use them to construct *all* complex propositions (4.5). Elementary propositions describe the most elementary level of reality, i.e. the occurrence or non-occurrence of states of affairs. And all more complex levels of situations which (may) occur in the world can be then accounted for by more complex propositions which are constructed using elementary propositions in a predictable way.

However, why are there two ways to account for the unity within our representation of the world if the objective unity is comprehensible merely by means of the notion of the logical space? Wittgenstein never tackled this issue explicitly, but we can try to make an interpretative guess. As Wittgenstein pointed out in the discussion concerning the space where particular objects, which compose states of affairs, are located, we may imagine this space as being similar to, say, a colour space; or, since he also mentions “tones” and “objects of the sense” (2.0131), a tonal space or space of sensibly perceivable objects.<sup>440</sup> Such metaphors seem to allow that there may be various spaces in which some “sections” of reality are localizable, but others aren’t (we cannot locate a tone in the colour space, for instance). In the case of the unity of the world, the unity of the space is guaranteed by the fact that everything may be considered an “object” (in a very general sense in which Wittgenstein uses the word).<sup>441</sup> But what guarantees that all *propositions* are located within one space and that they are thus all mutually interconnected in a comprehensible manner (and that I may derive one from the other and make various logical

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440 The metaphor of the space of states of affairs, where objects are located, differs from the metaphor of logical space. Apart from the logical space, there are also spaces of states of affairs in which objects which occur or may occur in various states of affairs are located. Employing the metaphor of the space, we may imagine each thing, “as it were, in a space of possible states of affairs” (*TLP*, 2.013). Similarly to imagining spatial object being surrounded by the colour-space, we may imagine the *Tractarian* simple objects as being surrounded by the space which entails all states of affairs in which these objects may appear. Based on this simile, we may picture the overall logical space as being composed of all spaces of states of affairs in which all the objects in the world may occur. And similarly to each object occupying a particular place in the space of states of affairs, each state of affairs occupies “its” space in the overall logical space. If the state of affairs occurs, it actually exists at this place, if not, it however at least may occur there.

441 For Wittgenstein, an “object” is everything from which states of affairs are (or may be) composed.

operations with them)?

It seems to be here that the significance of the general proposition form comes to the fore: it is this form, which makes all propositions the occupants of one space, since it is the form which *all* propositions have in common (5.47). Wittgenstein did not provide us with the information as to what precisely the objects look like, but we know at least that it is essential to them to combine within states of affairs with other objects. Similarly, we may say that what makes the proposition as a combination of words representational is that these words are assembled in a particular way so that the proposition says that “such and such is the case”.

Thus, I have attempted to provide one possible way of accounting for the overall unity within the body of propositions. However, it is striking that so far I have been concerned merely with the overall unity of *all* propositions. Even if it were of the central interest to Wittgenstein, we shouldn’t forget that he was also, at least with the same intensity, interested in the unity of each single proposition. How then do these two enterprises, the search for the unity of *a single* proposition and an inquiry into the unity of the body of *all* propositions, hang together?

As for the general propositional form, its formulation (“this is how things stand”) gives us a clear hint as to how to comprehend the nature of each single proposition: the general propositional form may be read as another formulation of the claim that a proposition is to be considered a fact: a proposition is a picturing fact which represents the pictured fact: the proposition with the form “this is how things stand” (or that “such and such is the case”) represents that the pictured situation is in the way in which the proposition depicts it.

And as the logical space is concerned, the account of a single proposition is based on the fact that each proposition may determine one particular place within this space only because it has a special structure, i.e. it determines its place within a logical space by means of its coordinates: and it is done by providing information about the way the objects within the situation, to which it refers, are combined. The notion of a proposition as a fact whose elements are combined in a particular way (thus representing that the elements within the situation referred to are so combined) thus again plays an essential role here.

The connection between the tasks of accounting for the unity of one proposition (or one situation occurring in the logical space) and all propositions (or the world as a whole) is not coincidental. On the contrary, it is precisely in this connection between the provision of both

unities that the similarity to Kant's project may be discovered. Let's begin by considering the unity as realized, in Wittgenstein, in proposition(s) and, in Kant, in judgement(s). For Kant, every single judgement unifies various perceptions by subsuming them under concepts and then determining them through the various forms of judgements (categorical, singular, assertoric etc). However, Kant's account of judgement is not merely an account of the unity of single judgements, but at the same time of the unity within the body of all judgements: every judgement, as a unification of representations in various judgemental forms, is also a way of bringing these representations into the highest unity in consciousness, i.e. into the unity of apperception.

Kant presents the transcendental unity of apperception as a demand for unity within consciousness. If there were not such a unity, we would be unable to account for the fact that all representations, which (may) occur in me, are *my* representations. Their belonging to me may be explained merely by their all belonging to the unified consciousness, i.e. to the unity of apperception. If there weren't this unity, i.e. if I couldn't comprehend all representations I (may) have in *one* consciousness, I would only be in possession of empirical consciousness, i.e. that consciousness which singularly accompanies representations in the inner sense.

However, this empirical kind of consciousness is "itself dispersed and without relation to the identity of the subject".<sup>442</sup> If I had only this empirical consciousness, "I would have as multicolored, diverse a self as I have representations of which I am conscious".<sup>443</sup> To account for the fact that all representations are mine, I must not only accompany them by particular (empirical) consciousness, but also be able to combine their manifold in one consciousness.<sup>444</sup> Thus, the existence of the unity of transcendental apperception is conceived by Kant as a demand that there is an overall unity within a consciousness based on which I may conceive of all representations which may occur as *mine*.

Within this picture, a judgement is conceived of as an essential tool by which representations are brought into this highest unity of apperception. As noted above, within each judgement, perceptions are subsumed under concepts which are, in turn, put into the particular forms of a judgement. How, though, is this account of the unification of perceptions within single judgements related to the issue of the overall unity within the body of all judgements?

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442 Kant, *CPR*, B133.

443 Ibid., B134.

444 Ibid., B133.

We may say that this unity is secured by the fact that each judgement is a way of bringing representations into the unity of apperception. If so, judgments, to be considered by me as “mine”, must be not only directed to the objects (as appearances), but also mutually non-contradictory. Moreover, the judgments are mutually interrelated by various logical relations due to the logical forms which they exhibit.

And, finally, we may add that the importance of the concept of the overall unity within the body of all judgements is eventually also emphasized in Kant's treatment of reason (*Vernunft*) which also serves a unificatory function: while understanding (*Verstand*) is the source of categories, it is the reason (*Vernunft*) whose aim is to “bring the greatest manifold of cognition of the understanding to the smallest number of principles (universal conditions), and thereby to effect the highest unity of the manifold”.<sup>445</sup> Thus, the unificatory function, substantiated in the understanding by the means of the categories, is brought to its fulfillment by reason's subsuming the whole of our cognition under the smallest number of universal conditions.<sup>446</sup>

Now redirecting our attention back to Wittgenstein, we may contend that it is the *general propositional form* which plays the same *unificatory role* as the forms of judgement and transcendental apperception play in Kant's epistemology. If there weren't this form, my representations could be “multicoloured” in that they may have various unpredictable forms, they may not be locatable in one single space and they may not be related to one another in a comprehensible way. And, similarly to Kant's accounting also for the unity of single judgement, the general propositional form also accounts for the unity of each single proposition since it claims that each single proposition (with the form “this is how things stand”) is a picturing fact which represents the pictured fact.

Apart from the unity of proposition(s), there is also, in Wittgenstein, the objective unity emphasized, i.e. the unity of the world enunciated by the notion of logical space where all possible and actual situations must be located. Now even if Kant's transcendental project is mostly focused on the subjective conditions of our cognition, we may also find an emphasis

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445 Ibid., A305/B361.

446 To provide a detailed account of Kant's notion of Reason (*Vernunft*), I would need to introduce his concepts of “ideas of Reason”. However, this would lead us too far to the practical implications of Kant's treatment of Reason. For the present purposes, I thus emphasize merely the fulfillment of the unificatory function which Reason provides, without going into further details.

laid on the necessity of the unification of the world as the totality of appearances. Due to the categories, under which the whole of our experience falls, the world is constructed as a unity governed by laws. The whole of all appearances is called “nature” by Kant<sup>447</sup> and it stands under the laws given by understanding via the application of categories: we are thus the true lawgivers of nature.<sup>448</sup>

Also, as we have seen in the first chapter, Kant defines object (as an appearance) as “that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united”<sup>449</sup>. An object as perceived by us is thus a singular unity within the world as represented by us. Due to the work of categories, each perceived object is considered as having some property (based on the application of the category of a substance and attribute) and as being located within the causal chain of causes and effects (due to the category of causality). Thus, we may say that Kant pays attention both to the notion of the world as a whole of appearances as unified and governed by the forms of understanding, and to the unity of objects within the world which have attributes and which are interconnected by the causal laws.

It is to be admitted that the approaches to objective unity differ in Wittgenstein and Kant, since while Wittgenstein resists giving any explanatory priority to the subjective or the objective side of the unity, Kant always directs our attention to the transcendental unity of consciousness – nature is always the sum of appearances *for us* and all objects with their properties and relations to other objects are objects as unified for our perception and cognition of them. However, the striking similarity in both philosophers’ accounts lies in their persuasion that to provide an account of objects and their properties and relations is essentially intertwined with the account of the overall unity of the world. For Kant, the application of categories, by means of which representations are adduced to the unity of apperception, explicates both the unity of appearances within the world (as perceived and judged by us) and of the unity of this world as a whole. Similarly for Wittgenstein, the notion of the logical space is explanatory both as regards the unity of the world as a whole (since every state of affairs must be locatable within

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447 Nature “regarded materially” (*natura materialiter spectata*), i.e. nature in the sense of its material, is for Kant “the sum total of all appearances” (Kant, *CPR*, B163); regarded formally, i.e. with regard to its form (*natura formaliter spectata*), nature is the “lawfulness of appearances in space and time” (Ibid., B165).

448 “The understanding is [...] not merely a faculty for making rules through the comparison of the appearances; it is itself the legislation for nature, i.e., without understanding there would not be any nature at all, i.e., synthetic unity of the manifold of appearances in accordance with rules [...]” (Ibid., A126-127).

449 See Ibid., B137 and chapter 1, pp. 18-19. Kant does not refer to the *noumena*, objects in themselves, since these are unattainable to us, see §26 of the “Transcendental Deduction” (B 164).

it) and as regards objects (which are mutually interconnected within states of affairs, located in particular places in the logical space).

Eventually, I am persuaded that it does not matter so much whether Wittgenstein would agree with the transcendental-idealistic approach to a philosophical account of judgements (or, in his words, propositions).<sup>450</sup> True, he employs some transcendental arguments – which I have summarized above – but as I attempted to show, he does not presuppose or postulate the existence of a transcendental subject to explain the meaningfulness of language (which may be accounted for within the confines of a psychological explication of meaning).

The crucial point of agreement with Kant eventually seems to reside not in the transcendental provision of meaningfulness to language but in Wittgenstein's persuasion that the way in which we attempt to explain the particular unity of a proposition (or a singular judgement in Kant) must be, at the same time, explanatory to the notion of the overall unity of the body of propositions (judgements). Earlier, I labelled Wittgenstein's approach, in opposition to that of early Moore and Russell, a top-down approach.<sup>451</sup> This label is justified since in Wittgenstein's treatment of both the unity of the proposition(s) and of the world, it is the notion of an overall unity which is explanatorily primary, in the sense that the account of a single entity (a proposition, object, state of affairs) must from the very beginning be embedded in an account of the overall unity (of all propositions, objects, states of affairs).

Thus, to provide particular examples, Wittgenstein's concept of a single proposition as a fact which says something about a situation external to it is embedded in the account of propositions in which knowing the truth or falsity of (this) one proposition amounts to the understanding of all other propositions which may be formed within the whole of language. Here, we may detect a striking similarity to Kant's approach in which one single judgment is always treated as a part of an overall web of all judgments which all need to be adduced into the unity of apperception. The similarity, however, does not reside in the notion of transcendental apperception – as the core notion of transcendental epistemology – but rather in this reliance of an account of a single judgment (proposition) on the whole of judgments

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<sup>450</sup> We may dispute what the “transcendentalist account of judgment” necessarily includes. For Kant, it resides in comprehending a judgment as a way of bringing perceptions under the unity of apperception. Interpreted more generally, we may see it as a kind of approach which attempts to determine the conditions of possibility of a judgment (either as an act of judging or as its product).

<sup>451</sup> In the section 5.4 of the thesis.



(propositions).

Analogously, in the case of a unity of the world, no object and no state of affairs is treated as a self-standing entity, independent of the other objects or states of affairs. Quite to the contrary, every object is characterized as a part of the states of affairs in which it may occur. To know the object amounts to knowing its possible occurrences in states of affairs (2.0123). Even if states of affairs are claimed to be mutually independent (2.061), it is essential to them that they form more complex situations amongst whom there are various logical relations. Eventually, every object and every state of affairs form a part of the world whose compositional possibilities are determined by the notion of the logical space in which every state of affairs which may occur must be locatable. Again, a similarity to Kant's approach may be traced here since Kant operates with the notion of the world as a unity of all appearances in which every single object (with all its properties and relations to other objects) is located. In the conclusion, I will argue that it is precisely this top-down approach which marks the most crucial difference between the approach shared by Kant and Wittgenstein on the one side, and Moore and Russell on the other.

## Conclusion

Many philosophers after Kant (for example, Bolzano, Brentano and his followers) criticized Kant's project of transcendental-idealistic epistemology for amounting, as they saw it, to merely psychological investigations. They were persuaded that Kant's supposed epistemology concerning the conditions of our cognition is nothing more than a psychological theory describing our mental acts and incapable of accounting for their truth or falsity. I attended particularly to Moore's endeavour in his *Dissertation* to denounce Kant's epistemology from a similar perspective. To be specific, Moore claimed that proper epistemology should not be concerned with our mental processes but merely with that to which truth or falsity may be ascribed – for which he coined the term “propositions”.

In addition to introducing propositions as mind-independent bearers of truth or falsity, Moore insisted that they are proper parts of the world – which itself consists of propositions. I paid special attention to two arguments Moore introduced to ground this contention (one against abstractionism and another against the possibility of defining truth) and concluded that neither is completely convincing. Apart from the fact that Moore's intriguing understanding of a proposition is not argumentatively well grounded, it is plagued with other difficulties, specifically with the vagueness of its account. Moore proposed in the *Dissertation* that a proposition consists of concepts and a relation binding these concepts together. However, he did not provide any definite account of the rules according to which concepts are supposed to be combined.

At that point Moore's friend Bertrand Russell took over the initiative and endeavoured, in his *Principles of Mathematics*, to give a more well worked-out and elaborate account of propositions and their composition. He further elaborated there the notion of a proposition as a worldly entity consisting of non-relating terms (things) and at least one relation which binds the proposition together. However, his account still included several difficulties: the concept of an analysis after which a relation loses its relational character, the all-encompassing notion of a “term”, and that we need to accept curious “objective falsehoods” – false propositions. All those difficulties eventually led Russell away from the theory of propositions as worldly entities towards his multiple relation theory of judgement. Multiple relation theory (throughout all the changes it underwent) states that when we judge, the terms from which the worldly complex (a

referent of judgment) is composed are present in the judgemental complex where they all have a non-relational nature and are assembled together by the judgemental relation, i.e. the relation produced by a judging person. The proposition as self-standing worldly entity thus disappeared and truth and falsity were moved back into judgement.

The above-mentioned direction- and unity problems are generally agreed to be the main difficulties for Russell's multiple relation theory. A direction problem resides in the fact that in non-symmetrical permutative complexes – in which non-relational terms can be replaced with a change of meaning – it is not obvious how it is guaranteed for me to end up with one judgement rather than another. The unity problem then has an even broader scope – it lies in the fact that terms within a judgement complex may be assembled, since the relation does not retain its relational nature, even in a way which ensues in forming a nonsensical judgement.

The unity problem directed us right into the centre of Russell's disputes with young Wittgenstein, since it is precisely this difficulty which is considered to form the centre of Wittgenstein's objection to Russell's theory of judgement. The core of this objection is often summarized as that it is possible to judge nonsense under Russell's multiple relation theory. In the interpretation I have put forward, there is a more pressing, yet rarely addressed issue that Wittgenstein wished to turn our attention to. Wittgenstein's key insight resided, I have contended, is his observation that Russell's multiple relation theory hinges on his general (not primarily epistemological, but rather ontological) theory of complexes which, in turn, accounts for Russell's inability to explain how the judgement complex differs from any other complex in the world and, thus, how it comes to have a special characteristic of being representational.

Given that Wittgenstein pointed this difficulty out to Russell, we might presume that he also provided his own solution to it. And he indeed did. In the *Tractatus*, he explicated the intentional character of propositions by their being facts which share the pictorial form and pictorial relation with the represented situations. Turning my attention back to the overarching topic of the thesis, the influence of Kant's epistemology to the discussed philosophers, I called attention to the role which some commentators claim the transcendental subject plays in Wittgenstein's account of propositions, namely providing language with meaning. However, I opposed that we may account for this meaningfulness merely by taking into account the psychological notion of an empirical subject which may be understood to carry out both name-object correlations and sign-symbol transformations. However, my account is then confronted with a question of whether Wittgenstein's approach to judgement may have been positively

influenced by Kantian approach at all.

I attempted to answer this question by exploring the relation between the notion of a unity of a single judgment (in Kant) and proposition (in Wittgenstein), and the overall unity of thought (Kant) or the body of propositions (Wittgenstein). Both Kant and Wittgenstein were persuaded that elucidating the unity of a single proposition or judgement requires taking into account the fact that this particular proposition or judgement is located within the whole of propositions and judgements – and we should also provide the account of the unity of this whole. And it is just this connection between both unities that is missing in both Moore's and Russell's theories of propositions and judgements. We may assume that both Moore and Russell had to tacitly presuppose that to illuminate the nature of propositions, it suffices to pay attention to particular propositions, disregarding the fact that propositions also form a totality whose unity need also be accounted for.

As for Moore, he made a revolutionary move towards the notion of a proposition as mind-independent worldly entity but left all difficulties regarding both the composition of a single proposition and relations among propositions unanswered. As regards any single proposition, he merely claimed that it consists of any number of terms and a relation. And as for the unity of all propositions, he did not consider the question at all. He took himself to have refuted the idealist (Bradleyan) conception, according to which every judgement is a predication of, and thus aims to capture one aspect of, a single all-embracing reality. As to what, when that single point of reference is removed, will then hold those judgements (or propositions) together, it seems that he never asked himself the question.

Russell placed at the centre of his philosophical account of propositions in the *Principles of Mathematics* the concept of the unity of a proposition. However hard he tried to solve the intriguing problem of the unity of a single proposition, though, he did not attend to the second issue of the unity within the body of propositions. Moreover, we have observed that even the concept of the unity of any single proposition proved problematic for him: any proposition consists of nonrelating terms and (at least one) relating relation, but Russell was, as he admitted unsure how to clarify the relational nature of relation included in the proposition.<sup>452</sup> The explication of his uncertainty may also serve, I am persuaded, to shed more light on his inability to account for the overall unity. As I pointed out, Russell put forward in the *Principles of*

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452 For further details, see section 3.2.2 of the thesis.

*Mathematics* his notion of a “term” under which everything which may form a part of a proposition falls. Thus, it is not only non-relational entities (things) which are terms, but also relations, which are at the same time assigned the function of providing a proposition with unity.

As I see it, it is precisely this atomistic conception of terms, which are each self-subsistent and independent of other terms, which is responsible for Russell’s difficulty throwing light both upon the unity of single proposition and his blindness to the issue of the overall unity of propositions.<sup>453</sup> When it is questionable how to account for the unity of any single proposition, since it is composed of several self-subsistent terms, how should it be possible to explain how the unity within the whole body of propositions is formed?

The same difficulty subsequently plagued Russell’s multiple relation theory of judgement as well: each judgement complex is composed of the judging subject and the objects which are all related together by the judgemental relation. Again, the problem of the unity, this time of the unity of a judgement, comes to the fore since, if the only relating relation is the judgmental relation, it is not guaranteed that the objects within judgmental complex will be assembled in a meaningful way. Thus, it may be doubted whether the unity of any single judgment is properly explicated. And, moreover, in all Russell’s renderings of the multiple relation theory of judgement, he explicitly analyses merely elementary judgements consisting of one relation (apart from a judgmental relation): e.g. *A loves B*, *A is on the right of the B* etc. It remained an unfinished task of the manuscript on the *Theory of Knowledge* to provide further details concerning the composition of more complicated judgement complexes.

We may doubt whether Russell would have had sufficient resources to provide a comprehensible account even if he had managed to finish the manuscript. I pointed out that both Kant and Wittgenstein were persuaded from the beginning that the correct theory of a singular judgment (proposition) must at the same time entail the explanation of how it comes about that there is also an overall unity within the body of all judgements (propositions). Russell, on the contrary, drawing on his atomistic ontology of terms and complexes built from them, elaborated first in the *Principles of Mathematics*, did not have this issue of overall unity in sight. He might have attempted to provide a theory concerning the building up of more complicated judgements on the basis of the elementary ones – for instance the judgment that

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<sup>453</sup> This conception, in turn, probably has been Russell’s reaction to British absolute idealism in which no single judgment and no single entity can be comprehended without taking into account the reality as a whole (“the Real” as Bradley calls it; see e.g. Bradley, 1883, p. 15ff.).

“A loves *B* and *C* hates *D*” might be conceived of as a judgment in which two judgement complexes are related – but then it would remain to be explained what the connection “and” between those two complexes amounts to.

However, one may still ask whether this “bottom-up” approach, in which the overall unity is to be reached by gradually building up the more and more complicated judgements onto single ones, could eventually account for the overall unity of either propositions or judgments. Neither Wittgenstein nor Kant conceived of the overall unity in this way, opting instead for what I called a top-down approach in which any particular element (be it a proposition, judgment, object or state of affairs) is treated in relation to the role and place it has within an overall totality (of judgments, propositions, objects or states of affairs). Kant explicated, within his general logic, how judgments are interconnected by the logical relations and he also attempted to provide the proof (in the Transcendental deduction of categories) of how *every* possible experience must stand under categories and how, thus, principles (synthetic *a priori* judgements considering the application of categories to sensible manifold) are applicable to the whole of possible experience. Moreover, he never paid attention, on the side of the referents of our judgments, merely to singular objects with their properties or relations, but focused also on their place within the nature as a whole of all appearances.

Wittgenstein introduced the notion of logical space as an encapsulation of how every single state of affairs, which may occur in the world, is located in one all-embracing space of possibilities (of occurrences or non-occurrences of states of affairs). And, on the side of propositional unity, he introduced the notion of a general propositional form which poses a demand that everything that is to be counted as a proposition must be in possession of this form. By doing so, he was able to delineate the realm of propositions as a whole with the certainty that he included everything which may bear a name of a proposition. Russell and Moore, on the other hand, did not have these resources at hand. Beginning with the notion of a single proposition, they were not in possession of means by which they could ascertain that they enlist all propositions, however far they may proceed with the enumerations of both simple and more complex propositions. Speaking quite generally, if you begin with some elements and attempt to build up the totality based on them, you will never reach this totality of elements. For one thing, you cannot be sure that won’t miss some elements out, and, for the other, you cannot be certain to recognize that you have already reached this totality. On the other hand, if you begin, as Kant and Wittgenstein did, with the concept of a whole, you may be sure that you will not

miss some elements and that you are at least potentially able to enumerate them all.

Thus, it seems to me that we may say that, by attempting to put an end to idealistic thinking, Russell and Moore, so to say, threw the baby out with the bathwater. By contrast, Wittgenstein acknowledged the interconnection of both queries and provided his account of states of affairs and the world as a whole on one side, and of single propositions and their overall connection on the other. In this essential respect, Wittgenstein can be legitimately described as a Kantian philosopher – or at least “a philosopher influenced by Kant's epistemology”, even if his conception of propositions and judgements differs from Kant's in many other important ways.



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